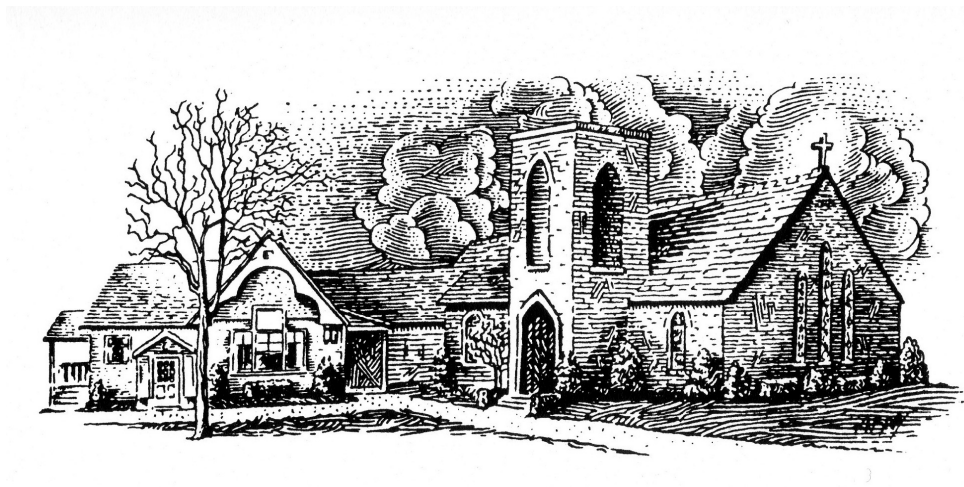
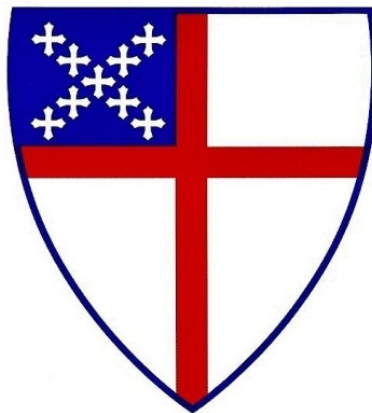


GRACE episcopal church

55 New Park Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106



Annual Meeting
February 8, 2026



Annual Report for 2025

CANONICAL VOTING LIST

(Adopted by the Grace Episcopal Church Vestry)

This list may be amended at the Annual Meeting in February 2026

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

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 16, 2026, 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 2026, 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.

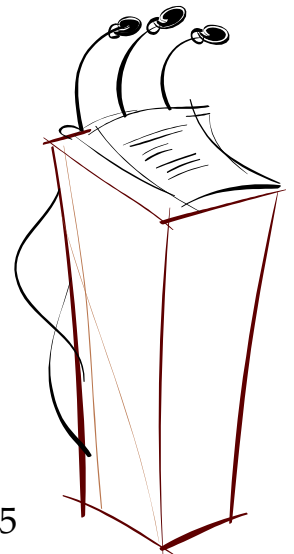
GRACE episcopal church

AGENDA

February 8, 2026

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 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
 - Counting Teams p. 11
 - Altar Guild p. 12
 - Flower Guild p. 12
 - Coffee CheerGivers Club p. 12
 - Christian Education p. 13
 - Music p. 14-15
 - Musical Friends p. 16
 - A Place of Grace Food Pantry p. 16-17
 - Christmas Giving to Parkville Families p. 17
- XII. Election of Wardens, Vestry, Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer; Delegate and Alternate for Diocesan Convention and to the Region Back Cover
- XIII. New Business: How is God calling us to mission?
- XIV. Appreciations and Regrets
- XV. Date of Next Annual Parish Meeting: Sunday, January 31, 2027
- XVI. Adjournment and Closing Prayer



ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

January 26, 2025

Nason Hall

I. Opening Prayer: The Rev. Rowena Kemp: The meeting opened at 12:38 P.M.

II. Quorum: There was a quorum.

III. Memories: The names were shared of parishioners who have died this year.

IV. Presentation of this meeting's Agenda:

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

V. Presentation and adoption of roll of Canonical Voting Members:

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

VI. Presentation and Acceptance of the Minutes from the 2024 Annual Meeting:

Motion: To accept the Minutes from the 2024 Annual Meeting: The motion was seconded and accepted.

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

A. Sabbatical: Rev. Rowena took her sabbatical from June through August this year. The Rev. Linda Spiers handled the Pastoral Care. The Rev. Joe Pace covered the masses in July and The Rev. Marcus Halley covered the ones in August. Rev. Rowena thanked the parishioners for her sabbatical. She really needed it.

B. Gratitude: Rev. Rowena expressed general thanksgiving for all the parishioners, and for:

1. *Haven Religious:* The Rev. Marta Rivera Monclova, Sr. Gregory Simmons and Sean Glenn from for all their contributions to Grace Church;
2. **Junior Warden:** Dr. Barbara Galbreath, for her wonderful job with church maintenance;
3. **Pantry:** Headed by Kathie Rovetti. Rev. Rowena stated that the surrounding community is quite transient, and that there are most likely some undocumented immigrants living in our community. We are an important part of the community;
4. **Music:** Kyle Swann and his expertise not only musically, but also on our liturgy; as well as the contributions of the choir;
5. **Senior Warden:** Claudia Gwardyak for all her contributions as Senior Warden.

VIII. Curate's Report ~ The Rev. Marta Rivera Monclova: Mtr. Marta is grateful to be at Grace Church. She expressed appreciation for the teamwork she finds here. She thanked those who attended her ordination on January 11, 2025.

IX. Senior Warden's Report ~ Claudia Gwardyak: Claudia reported that she was the Ecclesiastical Authority during Rev. Rowena's sabbatical.

X. Junior Warden's Report ~ Dr. Barbara Galbreath: Dr. Barb reported that three projects were completed; the ramp railing, the roof, and the porch.

XI. Treasurer's Report ~ Mark Lacedonia:

A. Results for 2024: Mark reported that we ended the year in the black. That included pledges, grants, insurance and investments, and a bequest from James Shafer's estate.

B. Salary Increases: The diocese recommended a 4.1% increase.

C. Mtr. Marta's Salary: It is paid from a two-year fellowship from Trinity Wall Street.

XII. Committee Reports:

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

A. Pastoral Care: Rev. Rowena asked that people inform her if someone is sick.

B. Acolytes: Formation instruction will commence on Wednesday afternoons.

C. Bishop's Visitation: The Rt. Rev. Jeffrey W. Mello, XVI Bishop Diocesan of Connecticut, will preside at Laetare Sunday masses on March 30, 2025, and will include two confirmations, a reception, and three first communions.

D. A Place of Grace Food Pantry - Kathie Rovetti reported that there have been over 300 families attending on the latter weeks of each month.

E. Christmas Gifts to our Neighbors: Claudia Gwardyak reported that those who contributed were very generous.

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

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

XIV. New Business:

A. Change in Bylaws

Motion: To reduce the number of required Vestry Members at Large from at least 6 to at least 4. The motion was seconded and passed.

B. Directory Update: This continues on an ongoing basis.

XV. Appreciations and Regrets: These were shared.

XVI. Next Annual Meeting: January 25, 2026. [The date was subsequently changed to February 8, 2026.]

Motion to Adjourn: The motion was seconded and passed. The meeting adjourned at 1:42 P.M.

Closing Prayer: Rev. Rowena led all in reciting *The Lord's Prayer*.

Respectfully Submitted,
Katharine Rovetti, *Parish Clerk*

RECTOR'S REPORT

Beloved in Christ,

Thank you for being here at Grace — not simply to attend an annual meeting, but to show up for one another, for this parish, and for the Gospel we are called to live together. Gathering in this way is itself an act of faith. It declares that even in uncertain times, we trust that God is still at work among us.

I begin with gratitude. I am deeply thankful for this community—for your prayers, generosity, patience, humor, and quiet faithfulness. Much of what sustains Grace never appears in reports or budgets. It is found in meals shared, prayers offered, visits made, hands held, and love given freely. This kind of faithfulness is holy, and it matters more than we often realize.

We enter this year facing real challenges. Declining membership, financial pressure, and uncertainty about the future are not abstract concerns; they shape our daily decisions. It would be neither honest nor faithful to deny these realities. Scripture never asks God's people to ignore the truth. What it does ask is that we face the truth with trust rather than fear.

And here is the truth that must be named clearly: this parish is not failing! We are changing. And in the midst of that change, ministry is blossoming. Lives are being touched. Prayer is deepening. Service is bearing fruit. Christ is being encountered in worship, in formation, and in acts of care. These are not small signs; they are signs of resurrection life!

Christian hope has never depended on abundance alone. The Church was born not from security, but from trust—hearts set on fire by the Spirit. The question before us is not only how to preserve what has been, but how to be faithful to what God is doing now.

That faithfulness will require courage and imagination. It will require releasing the assumption that the future must look like the past in order to be faithful. Above all, it will require love—Christian love that is patient, kind, truthful, and hopeful.

You are not alone in this work. We walk this path together—with one another, with the wider Church, and with a God who has promised never to abandon what God has begun. The same Spirit who has sustained this parish through generations is still present, still guiding, and still calling us forward.

As we move into the coming year, I invite us to hold fast to three commitments: to remain rooted in prayer, not as a last resort but as our first response; to stay deeply connected to one another, speaking kindly and assuming goodwill; and to remain open to hope—not naïve optimism, but the Christian hope that trusts God can do more than we can ask or imagine.

Beloved, God is not finished with us. This parish still has a vocation, still has light to shine, still has love to give. I am profoundly grateful to walk into this, my tenth year with you—trusting not in what we can control, but in the faithfulness of God who calls us forward.

May we go into this year grounded in faith, strengthened by hope, and held fast by love.

Thank you! Thank you and may God bless you!

Rowena+



CURATE'S REPORT

This past year has been one of deepening, clarification, and learning — often beneath the surface — at Grace. On January 11, I marked the anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood, following a year that included several significant sacramental milestones: participation in two Confirmations, one Reception, and three First Communions, as well as my first wedding (my mother's) and my first funeral (my father's). Though these latter two did not take place at Grace, both profoundly shaped my understanding of priestly responsibility and the weight carried by the Church's sacramental life.

This year also included a hospital visit to a former Grace parishioner who was, at the time of her death, a beloved member of my Cambridge congregation and of the monastery where I completed a residency. One of the lay brothers came to lead a bedside service. His fifty-two years of experience in pastoral ministry made the moment both deeply moving and quietly instructive — a master class in calm presence, attentiveness, and trust in the Church's prayers when words themselves grow thin. It was a powerful reminder that pastoral care is not the province of the ordained alone, but a ministry grounded in prayer, steadiness, and faithful witness, available to the whole Church.

The transition from deacon to priest has felt less like a change in daily tasks and more like a deepening of sacramental accountability. While people often approach clergy differently after diaconal ordination, priesthood has primarily altered how I experience the liturgy itself — particularly the moment of elevation, when the chalice is held aloft. In that act, the prayer "My Lord and my God" names Christ's real presence in the sacrament, while the eastward-facing posture reflects the congregation's faces in the cup itself: a vivid reminder that Christ's Body is present both on the altar and in the gathered Church.

Preaching and teaching have been steady components of the year. Grace's vibrant preaching rota led to me preaching approximately once a month, with recurring themes of honesty, confession, compassion for self and others, and theological attentiveness — including the careful navigation of Trinity Sunday. Beyond sermons, I introduced two sessions of our Advent series on Bonhoeffer, presented research on the Spanish Prayer Book at an Episcopal history conference, and continued regular teaching with children and youth. This included co-teaching two Christmas carols — our children's first in English — with Kathie Rovetti.

Liturgically and administratively, significant groundwork was laid. With Sr. Gregory, I helped develop and maintain an updated liturgical and events calendar, bringing greater clarity to parish rhythms. Assigning Sean formal sacristan responsibilities reduced Sunday-morning scramble. We completed both a Liturgical Customary for Low and High Mass and a Newcomer's Guide to the Solemn High Mass, grounded in careful study of sources such as *Ritual Notes* and the *Anglican Missal*. Monthly Evensong continued, alongside select off-cycle Masses that served as a laboratory for thoughtful liturgical experimentation.

This work has been made possible in part through the continuing generosity of Trinity Wall Street, whose fellowship support — extended to cover the full curacy period — has allowed me to devote sustained attention to Grace's liturgical, pastoral, and formative life.

Grace needs growth, and in the coming year our priority must be to build real hospitality skills. We pray weekly for the increase of the parish; the work ahead is to align that prayer with action: invitation, partnership, and shared responsibility. Most people I know at Grace ended up here because they came once and fell in love with something. We need to help more people come once. Let 2026 be a year of invitation.

I remain grateful for the trust of this community and for the privilege of offering our shared sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving — attentive to the tradition we have received, and hopeful about what faithful practice may yet bring forth.

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





SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

Roles - The role of the Senior Warden needs definition. Other than de facto back up authority if clergy are not present, or available, the Senior Warden, while recognized in the Diocese as part of the church's leadership, does not have a defined role in comparison to the Treasurer (finances) or Clerk (official record keeping). My suggestion going forward would be to have the senior leaders of the church community more clearly define the leadership roles. Agreement among the leaders, including the clergy, might make church life more efficient and effective.

Covering for the Rector – In the past year, as Senior Warden, I covered the lay jobs of the Rector during her August vacation, including attendance at the load in and pantry activities, on Sundays for both services and coffee hour, and the Finance Committee meeting on August 8th and the Vestry meeting on August 15th. I also attended and hosted the reception following the Musical Friends concert on August 23rd. I stayed until the end and cleaned up, readying the church hall for Sunday. I also stayed to lock up on August 31st and provided flowers for the altar on Sept 7th and 14th, as well as boutonnieres for Tom and Elaine for their 70th wedding anniversary.

Finance Committee – Sr. Gregory Simmons chaired the Finance Committee during the year, and we effectively discussed Grace's future. Thanks to Mark Lacedonia, Treasurer, we were informed that at the rate of our current withdrawal of funds from our investments, we would spend down these funds substantially within the next 3-5 years. Again, under Sr. Gregory's leadership, we held a brainstorming discussion of possible ways to manage this process, as well as outcomes that might be acceptable. This discussion was viewed as the beginning of possible strategic planning for helping Grace to prosper in years to come. We agreed that a group should be formed to consider the issues.



Respectfully submitted, Claudia Gwardyak



JUNIOR WARDEN'S REPORT

In March 2025, the exterior lights were repaired at the Church and the interior lights in the offices and Pantry Areas were replaced and repaired. The electrical issues at the rectory were also addressed and fixed. This work was done by First Electric Company.

A portion of the Parish Hall roof leaked in March 2025 and was replaced in a timely fashion by Everest Home Improvement Company. At the same time, they also replaced the damaged ceiling tile in the kitchen.

The new air conditioning system and roof shelf was installed in April 2025 by Everest Home Improvement Company.

The drain line to the sewer was backing up and repaired by Roto Rooter and Roach Plumbing and Heating. Roach Plumbing and Heating also inspected the furnace at this time.

This then led to repairs of the basement bathroom which were completed by Jim Bailey, handyman. These repairs included a new door, toilet repairs, and a new faucet to the sink.

In December 2025, Roach Plumbing and Heating replaced the circulating fan in the furnace and the piano in the Parish Hall was tuned. The piano tuning was a gift from Adrienne Brown.

Many thanks to Mark and Jane Lacedonia, as they spent many hours working in the Church yard and gardens as well as the Rectory.

Dr. Barbara Galbreath, *Junior Warden*



TREASURER'S REPORT

Here are some of the financial highlights for 2025:

We are blessed to have our part-time curate, The Rev. Marta S. Rivera Monclova, in our midst. She joined in July of 2024 and will be with us until June 2026. And if you don't know, her compensation is covered entirely through a fellowship we have with Trinity Wall Street.

Driven by declining membership (due in part to the passing of several parishioners over the past few years), pledged income received in 2025 was down by \$24,139 as compared to the prior year.

We are fortunate to possess a multi-million-dollar investment portfolio comprised of Donations and Bequests (D&B), the Wellman Trust, the Klemonski Fund and the relatively new Grace Investment Fund. 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.

Several people have asked me how long we can continue to withdraw money from our investment funds. So, I decided to put pencil to paper, and here's the answer (with the calculation):

Klemonski Fund	\$436,411.53
Grace Inv. Fund	311,404.86
Total (As of 11/30)	\$747,816.39
$\$747,816.39 / \$170,000 \text{ per yr} = 4.4 \text{ years}$	

This projection assumes a constant level of pledged income, maintaining the current level of payroll with no cost-of-living adjustments and no inflation.

Conclusion: If we stay on the current run-rate, the Klemonski and the Grace Investment Funds (the only two that allow unlimited withdrawals) will be fully depleted in 4.4 years or APRIL 2030!!!

Please note that 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 2025. And equally important, we received another relatively "clean opinion".

And lastly, a lingering concern for the 2026 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 2025 Financial Statements (Balance Sheet and Income Statement) and the 2026 Operating Budget.

Thanks,
Mark Lacedonia, *Treasurer*

2025 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Consolidated Balance Sheet (As of 12/31/25):

ASSETS		LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE	
KeyBank Checking	\$ 29,364.40	Accounts Payable	\$.00
KeyBank Savings	58.03	Annuity (HEA)	21,780.94
Fidelity	711.84	Rector's Leave	19,014.18
Total Cash	\$ 30,134.27	Total Liabilities	\$ 40,795.12
Receivables	\$ 129.20		
D&B	\$ 481,222.22		
Wellman Trust	1,118,705.93	Fund Balances	\$ 2,319,254.43
Klemonski Fund	419,600.26		
Grace Investment Fund	310,257.67		
Total Investments	\$ 2,329,786.08		
TOTAL	\$ 2,360,049.55	TOTAL	\$ 2,360,049.55

Consolidated Cash Basis* Income Statement (For Year Ended 12/31/25):

*Excluding the Unrealized Loss on our Investment Portfolios of \$(21,011.06).

INCOME		EXPENSES	
Pledges	\$ 82,302.66	Rector	\$ 127,161.39
Contributions/Grants	68,421.39	Curate	57,255.50
Cash From Investments	248,879.60	Organist	33,457.06
Other Income	762.98	Secretary	18,926.16
Trinity Wall Street Fellowship	58,749.04	Supply Priests / Rector's Leave	2,825.00
Total Income	\$ 459,115.67	Total Compensation	\$ 239,625.11
		Office	\$ 9,675.55
		Parish Administration	9,670.43
		Worship, Education & Music	5,758.74
		Diocesan Assessment	25,127.16
		Total Administrative Expenses	\$ 50,231.88
		Church Utilities	\$ 16,919.73
		Church Cleaning & Maintenance	25,305.06
		Rectory Utilities	4,820.86
		Rectory Repairs & Maintenance	4,539.20
		Property Insurance	12,779.00
		Total Buildings and Grounds	\$ 64,363.85
		TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$ 354,220.84
		Pantry Expenses	\$ 37,423.93
		Choral Singers	\$ 8,175.00
		Major Repairs	\$ 66,499.50
		Musical Friends	\$ 2,325.00
		Other Restricted Funds	\$ 8,799.42
CASH BASIS NET LOSS	\$ (18,328.02)	TOTAL CASH EXPENSES	\$ 477,443.69

2026 PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET

CASH INCOME

Pledges	\$ 61,495 ~ Based on Pledge Cards (24)
All Other	25,000 ~ Based on recent Experience
Total Contributions	\$ 86,495
Reimbursement from TWS	\$ 29,375 ~ Per Contract with Trinity Wall Street
D&B	\$ 18,384 ~ Per ECCT
Wellman Trust	48,549 ~ Per Bank of America
Klemonski Fund	90,000 ~ To Balance Budget
Grace Investment Fund	80,000 ~ To Balance Budget
Total Cash from Investments	\$ 236,933
TOTAL CASH INCOME	\$ 352,803

CASH EXPENSES

Rector's Compensation	\$ 124,675 ~ 3.25 % Increase (per ECCT)
Curate's Compensation	29,375 ~ Per Contract with Trinity Wall Street
All Other Employees	54,205 ~ 3.25 % Increase (per ECCT)
Supply Priests	4,000 ~ 5 Weeks / Rector's Leave Accrual
Total Compensation	\$ 212,255
Office	\$10,000 ~ Based on Recent Experience
Parish Administration	10,000 ~ Based on Recent Experience
Worship & Music	8,000 ~ Based on Recent Experience
Diocesan Assessment	25,127 ~ Per ECCT
Total Administrative Expenses	\$ 53,127
Church Utilities	\$ 15,960 ~ 14% Increase (per DEA)
Church Cleaning Service	14,250 ~ Per New Vendor Contract
Church Maintenance	20,000 ~ Same as Last Year
Rectory Utilities	6,840 ~ 14% Increase (per DEA)
Rectory Maintenance	12,000 ~ Same as Last Year
Property Insurance	13,945 ~ Per ECCT
Total Buildings and Grounds	\$ 82,995
Total Cash Expenses	\$ 348,377
NET INCOME (CASH BASIS)	\$ 4,426



COUNTING TEAMS

There are 3 counting teams, and they are working in rotation. David Galbreath, a non-parishioner, has joined the counting team.

Barbara Galbreath

ALTAR GUILD

The Altar Guild worked nicely this year. *Haven Religious* laundered and ironed the altar linens which was much appreciated. The mystery chalice was returned to Church Supplies in September as they finally requested its return. Jane Lacedonia led the group in polishing the brass for Easter and Christmas. Many thanks to the clergy and *Haven Religious* for all of their help in 2025.

Barbara Galbreath

FLOWER GUILD

The Flower Guild consisted of Claudia Gwardyak and Barb Galbreath. They arranged the Church for Palm Sunday. Flowers were ordered and arranged for Easter and Christmas. There was an impressive Garden of Repose for Maundy Thursday.

Throughout the year, the Church and Parish Hall were decorated with fresh flowers. Many thanks to the Lacedonias for their help with the Christmas poinsettias and Rev Rowena for their help this past year.

If anyone is interested in joining the Flower Guild, please contact Barb Galbreath.

Barbara Galbreath



COFFEE HOUR BY THE COFFEE CHEERGIVERS CLUB (CCC)

The Coffee Hour following 10:30 a.m. Solemn Mass is provided by members of the CCC. Originally, its members numbered 15; however, through attrition, the members currently number 11. This group is modest in number, demeanor, and reliability. Weekly, they have promoted the mission of **fellowship** to parishioners and facilitated **hospitality** to guests. Their satisfaction is their reward. For the first time, their loyal efforts were formally recognized on November 9, 2025, in conjunction with the return of the Veteran's Day Breakfast, hosted by CCC member and our very own Rev. Rowena. This Veteran's Day Breakfast & CCC Appreciation Day is now an annual event. Other annual event Sundays included the following:

January 25, 2025: Annual Meeting

September 7, 2025: Annual barbecue picnic/Pantry Appreciation Day

Dr. Barbara Galbreath continues providing sweet goodies for the Coffee Hour following 8:00 a.m. Low Mass.

It is an honor & pleasure to begin my third year as assigner for the Coffee Hour.

Respectfully submitted, Adrienne Brown

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Christian formation at Grace this year has taken place across ages and seasons, shaped by shared prayer, thoughtful study, and growing participation. From children learning the gestures and rhythms of the liturgy to adults engaging scripture, theology, and communal reflection, these offerings have helped deepen our common life in faith.

Children and Youth Formation

Children's formation remains one of the most hopeful areas of parish life. Typically, five to seven children gather weekly, alternating between hands-on creative work (including icon-making with Linda Spiers) and liturgical practice. This year we adapted a processional cross so smaller children could serve as crucifer, and spent time learning liturgical posture and movement. We also learned that having a dedicated activity facilitator allows me to focus on translation, so children can participate fully regardless of English or Spanish fluency. The children's leadership of the Novena del Niño Jesús was a particular highlight, reflecting growing confidence, reverence, and a genuine sense of ownership in prayer.

Adult Formation: Lent

In Lent, we offered a multi-week series titled "Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit in Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind". Each session focused on a particular dimension of Christian formation — faithfulness, peace, joy, generosity, patience — culminating in a reflection on Walking the Way of Love. Attendance was strong throughout the season, including participants from St. Stephen's Bloomfield and St. Martin's Hartford. These gatherings were characterized by warm fellowship, honest conversation, shared prayer, and meaningful formation, offering space not only to learn, but to practice listening, reflection, and mutual encouragement.

Adult Formation: Advent

Adult Christian formation this year was marked by strong participation, thoughtful conversation, and a widening circle of shared learning across parishes. During Advent, we offered a series on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Life Together*, which fostered rich discussion about Christian community, prayer, and shared discipline. The series drew not only members of Grace, but friends from St. Stephen's Bloomfield, St. Martin's Hartford, Trinity Hartford, and St. Monica's, as well as the Rt. Rev. Laura Ahrens and the Rev. Jill Morrison of the Commons. The presence of clergy and laity from across the diocese deepened the conversations and strengthened a sense of common life beyond parish boundaries.

Looking ahead, these experiences point toward a promising path for Christian formation at Grace. There is clear appetite for opportunities that combine serious theological engagement with relational depth, hospitality, and shared prayer. In the coming year, we hope to build on this momentum by welcoming new participants, strengthening partnerships with neighboring parishes, and continuing to create spaces where people feel invited to explore faith together — curious, grounded, and open to transformation.



The Choir has continued to sing for the 10:30 A.M. Sung Mass each week, as well as the Holy Days (Christmas Eve, Ash Wednesday, Triduum, Annunciation, Ascension, Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and All Souls'). Holy Cross Day as well as Holy Innocents were celebrated on their respective Sundays, with the Feasts of All Saints' and St. Martin-of-Tours being transferred. Choral settings of the Ordinary of the Mass have been added, as well as a few Gregorian antiphons. The Propers for Christmas Masses were chanted in Latin. Additionally, we have added other service music to the repertory — particularly the Galuppi Mass that was sung for the Eve of the Nativity and Epiphany Masses. The Choir did not contribute music for the event that took place on New Year's Eve.

A generous financial contribution has underwritten professional choristers to support our indefatigable volunteer core of singers. Additionally, that same donor allowed for our string trio for Easter Sunday; all this made the "Mozart Mass" feasible (*Missa brevis in D minor* and *Regina coeli*).

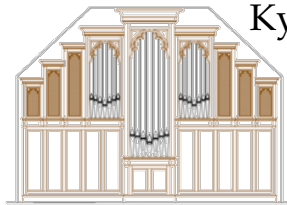
The Schoenstein organ continued, in its ninth year, to provide unparalleled support to both choral and congregational singing. Although in-person attendance in the congregation is sparse, the hymnody is sung with vigor — largely due to the organ's ability to foster such lusty cantillating. Additionally, we have been lucky to have Leo Snow on both Baroque and modern flutes as well as piccolo, with Betsy Chicares returning as well. A good time was had by all after Mass on 6 July, as they joined the organist in E Power Biggs's arrangement of J P Sousa's "The Stars and Stripes Forever."

The Choir roster has been steady, with Barbara Pond having joined in the late summer. Some pieces have been put into temporary retirement, while many others have been added. Hymns, anthems, and motets continue to be selected for their suitability to the Proper of the Day, and with consideration of the choral manpower. We continue to use *The Hymnal 1982*, as well as its British cousin *The New English Hymnal* on occasion. The service music has also been expanded to include polyphonic settings of music for the Asperges and the Marian hymns.

It is worth noting that, in addition to committing nearly 300 hours a year to rehearsals and Masses, many singers from the Grace Choir contribute to the life of the Parish — be it hosting coffee hour, helping with the pantry, decorating the church for holidays, etc.

The obvious need of the Choir is the same as the Parish: more members! There are countless instances where the singers are stretched to one voice on a part, and the balance is generally 2:1 with trebles to tenors and basses. Although we are— numerically speaking — rather small, the Choir does a fine job continuing and maintaining the musical standard of Anglo-Catholicism. That is a testament to the commitment and investment of the singers, both individually and collectively.

A series of conversations and examinations should occur regarding the attendance of the Holy Day Masses, as well as the liturgical preparations and executions thereof. Christmas Eve had one parishioner present, along with some visiting family of choristers. Although the singers in the Choir are not performers (as such), but rather ministers, it is disenchanting to devote many hours to the preparation of music that is heard by so few. Perhaps an earlier time for the weekday Holy Day Masses would yield an increase in attendance. It would behoove us to determine why our parishioners seem unable or unwilling to attend Masses in the evenings.



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 2025 *Musical Friends* had its largest audience ever making the church space appear “SOLD OUT”. Grace Church hosted a reception after this concert – the first reception since before the pandemic. It was an overwhelming success and enjoyed by all!

A couple of comments from attendees at the 2025 Concert:

“Last night’s concert was really terrific: Great breadth of tunes, very well played, excellent integration of the three instruments, good crowd, good venue, you looked fabulous

“I enjoyed your 20th anniversary Musical Friends program at Grace Episcopal Church. Your trio’s musical friendship is obvious and contagious: watching and listening to the three of you perform joyful, original arrangements of world music is uplifting and soul soothing. I love the variety of flutes and stringed instruments, played with great warmth and mastery individually and as an ensemble. And all three of you have great presence on stage as performers and speakers

Musical Friends thanks all the volunteers who make these concerts possible. Their contributions include grant proposal assistance, paying the musicians, creating and disseminating publicity as well as help with reception planning and set up and clean-up. Special thanks is due to Rev. Rowena Kemp who has been a devoted supporter of our concerts and for allowing Grace Episcopal Church to act as our fiscal sponsor. Claudia Gwardyak, senior warden of the church, graciously welcomed the audience to Grace Episcopal Church and the concert. Thanks also to Mark Lacedonia for support with grant writing, bookkeeping and check writing.

If funded, Grace Episcopal Church will host *Musical Friends* in a concert in 2026. 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 360 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 meet in the church’s courtyard early in the morning and enter the church around 8:30 A.M. They receive a number and sit down to wait for their number to be called. When that happens, they enter Nason Hall. 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, oversee the selection process, restock the food items, and break down the cardboard boxes for recycling.

We are pleased to continue our partnership with Trinity College. 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 Bruegger'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

Thank you everyone who shopped for Christmas gifts for Parkville kids. We together made gift bags for 252 children in 65 families. Our distribution day, December 13, was a very satisfying experience for all. A number of Grace folks, friends and relations, and a large number of St. James's parishioners contributed generously. When people asked me why we were doing this, especially children who were amazed by the brand new toys and clothes, I answered that at Christmas time, the wise men brought gifts for Baby Jesus. Like them, we are all the wiser for this work.

Claudia Gwardyak, *Chair*

ELECTION INFORMATION

2026 Nominees

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

Positions to be filled for 2026

Officers (one-year term)

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

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##### Members of the Vestry

##### Vestry Members at Large

Electing Replacement Class of 2027

(one-year term)

Douglas Bowman

Electing Class of 2029 (three-year term)

Claudia Gwardyak

Daniel Kendzior

##### Continuing to serve

Class of 2027

Gregory Simmons

Class of 2028

Sheryl Rifkin

**Retiring Vestry Members:** Josephine Dominguez and Linda Galarza Rosa

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Vestry Member Emeritus: Thomas Phillips

Grace Episcopal Church

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The Rev. Rowena J. Kemp, *Rector*

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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