



# The MESSENGER

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Advent 2023

*It is baptism where all ministry begins and where the Church has its birth*

“Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ’s Body the Church.” (BCP, pg. 298)  
In the waters of baptism we are grafted to the Body of Christ, and we share in the priesthood of Jesus. Baptism is a moment of true conversion, when a new identity is received, and Christ’s Body takes on new flesh. It is baptism, not ordination, where all ministry begins and where the Church has its birth. The Catechism lists “the baptized” as first among the ministers of the Church.

In order to express more fully the place of importance of baptism in the life of the Church, our baptismal font has been moved to a place of honor and prominence. Thus, we are confronted with the centrality of baptism every time we gather for worship, and the assembly is able to encircle each baptismal candidate as they receive the Sacrament of New Birth. In addition, our friends who worship with us via Live-Stream, are able to see and experience the celebration of baptism more clearly.

Our font did not always reside in its former home. (Thank you, Dr. Suzanne Bowles, Church Historian, for helping us understand the likely changes in font location in our space over the years!) Rather, at one time the font was in back of the room and was moved as the nave expanded. So, this is not the first time our font has made a journey in our space.



*We thank you, Father, for the water of Baptism. In it we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in his resurrection. Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit. Therefore in joyful obedience to your Son, we bring into his fellowship those who come to him in faith, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*

Our font is beautiful and dear to us. Solid marble and coming in at just under 1,000 pounds, any move had to be made carefully and thoughtfully. We were blessed by the skill and care of John McManus who, together with engineers, ensured the safe transfer of our sacred font. Nancy Dougherty, of Studio 1200, designed the flooring that would enthrone the font in its new location. And the project was funded by a very generous gift from

Bruce Rudin, made in loving memory of our cherished Dora Monserrate, whose own baptism was a blessing to us, and who celebrated every baptism with joy.

When you are with us for worship, please take a moment to remember your own baptism and ponder your identity as one who has a share of the royal priesthood of Jesus, you who have been marked as Christ’s own forever!



STEWARDSHIP

2024 Gratitude and Grace



Thank you to all who have sent their pledges in as part of our 2024 Gratitude and Grace stewardship campaign! We are hoping to have the bulk of the pledges in by now in support of our annual planning process.

On November 19, we will be celebrating our campaign and community with a festive coffee hour hosted by the Vestry, and the sharing of “I pledged” stickers. Please plan on joining us on this festive day, and bring your pledge!

Thank you, The Stewardship Committee

It’s a great time to give at Grace



Our website has an online giving feature. It’s easy to use.

You can:

- let us know your 2024 pledge commitment
- pay your pledge, or set up recurring payments
- make a one-time contribution
- pay for flower dedications
- donate to Re-Start Ministry
- make a Memorial Gift Donation

Simply go to our website: [www.gracemadison.org](http://www.gracemadison.org), then click the Giving link.



Financial Overview

As suggested in our stewardship writeup, our operating results for the first ten months of 2023 are somewhat better than those assumed in this year’s budget. Total Revenues are somewhat higher than projected at \$707.8 thousand, while Total Expenses are somewhat less than expected at \$732.4 thousand. Combining revenues and expenses, our ten month year to date Net Income is a loss of \$24.6 thousand, which compares with a loss of \$46.2 thousand, which was projected last spring. Getting a bit further into the details, reasons for the better than expected performance on Total Revenues, include performance in line with projections for pledge and other contributions from the parish following the usual slowing in such

General Fund	10 Months Ended October 31, 2023		
	\$ Thousands	Actual	Budget
Total Revenue	\$707.8	\$697.3	\$10.5
Total Expenses	\$732.4	\$743.5	(\$11.1)
Net Income (Loss)	(\$24.6)	(\$46.2)	\$21.6

receipts over the summer and the successful results of this year’s auction. Higher than expected dividends on a fund that is part of the endowment was an important positive. Reasons for Total Expenses coming in somewhat lower than forecast include lower than expected expenditures on utilities.

As is usual in this and all years, your help in following through with pledge payments over the next two and a half months is an extremely important component of our plan

for the financing of our operations. In this regard, by now, you should have received your Parishioner Pledge Statement which was scheduled for distribution by email or by mail early in October. We learn now that some of these distributions may have been subject to email problems and not delivered as planned.

If you have not received yours, please reach out to our bookkeeper Osh Khuball, at [okhuball@gracemadison.org](mailto:okhuball@gracemadison.org).

## Blessing of the Animals

Sunday, October 8

All were invited to bring their pets (stuffed, real, or a photo) to worship on **St. Francis Sunday**, when we remember the saint who honored all animals.



WORSHIP



By sacred coincidence, on the day the Baptismal Font project was completed, Bishop Hughes was visiting Grace Church to preside at a liturgy of the Asiamerica Ministries Network, as we were hosting the EAM convocation for their annual conference. Bishop Hughes blessed the font in its new location, and our guests from EAM surrounded it for prayer. Further, Bishop Matthew Heyd, Bishop Coadjutor of the Diocese of New York, visited for the same conference, and opened his keynote address by commending the people of Grace Church for placing baptism at the center of their lives in such a beautiful way.

Our next baptismal services are  
*The Baptism of Our Lord,*  
January 7, 2024 10AM  
*The Great Vigil of Easter*  
March 30, 2024, 7PM  
*The Day of Pentecost*  
May 19, 2024, 10AM  
Speak to one of our clergy  
if you are interested in  
being baptized, or having  
your child baptized.



**Thanksgiving Day**

Join us for a Holy Eucharist Thanksgiving worship service on November 23 at 10AM. Please note, the parish office will be closed on November 23 & 24.

**Christmas Services**

*December 24, Advent 4*  
10AM Choral Holy Eucharist

*December 24, Christmas Eve*  
4:30PM Carol Prelude & Bells  
5PM Choral Mass & Nativity Pageant  
8:30PM Carol Prelude & Bells  
9PM Choral Mass

*December 25, Christmas Day*  
10AM Choral Holy Eucharist

Our services are also available on  
[www.youtube.com/  
GraceChurchMadisonNJ](http://www.youtube.com/GraceChurchMadisonNJ)



**Advent Events**

Our Advent Evensong is a candlelight service on Sunday, December 17 at 4PM with combined choirs. Music by Stanford, Ayleward, Rheinberger, Gjeilo and Advent carols. *Free! Bring a friend.*

Following the Evensong is the *Tree of Light* ceremony. We will light a Christmas tree to remember and to honor those we love. Each light will be a tribute to someone we love and will be included in the *Tree of Light* booklet.

Help create a brilliant *Tree of Light* by sponsoring a light for each honoree and/or sponsoring the Tree Top Star. This is the only memorial opportunity for the Christmas season. A form can be found online or at church. Please submit names by Wednesday, December 13.



## CHILDREN & YOUTH



### Pizza & Prayer

First Wednesday of the Month, 6-7PM  
December 6, January 3, February 7

Kids age 3-10 and their parents are invited to meet in the kitchen to make pizza together, eat together, worship together in a family-friendly evening service. Kids are encouraged to help lead the services by reading prayers, helping with candles or playing music during the service. Come for Pizza & Prayer as we worship as a family and a community!



**Nativity Pageant** Each year we have a large cast of kids ages 3 to high school present the Nativity story during the Christmas Eve service. The main or 'named' roles are available to kids ages 7 through grade 8. The Christmas Eve service with Pageant begins at 5PM. Registration closes November 19. Questions, contact Miss Kathryn: [kmcmanus@gracemadison.org](mailto:kmcmanus@gracemadison.org).



### YOUTH EVENTS!

Save the dates!



Please join us for **Grace Family Caroling** on Friday, December 1. We will meet at Grace at 5PM for a quick run-through of the songs, eat pizza, then go to Convent Station for caroling. Apple cider and snacks will be served at the Finlay's home after caroling. Let us know if you can come, RSVP to [hanhuang3@gmail.com](mailto:hanhuang3@gmail.com).



The Youth Group had their *All Hallows Eve Service and Celebration* a few days before Halloween at Grace to ensure that no one would be hindered from trick-or-treating later that week!



EVENTS



Annual Holiday Arts Festival

Thanksgiving Weekend  
November 24 & 25

The Madison Arts and Cultural Alliance (MACA) will present the annual Holiday Arts Festival on Friday, November 24, from noon until the parade. The festival provides free performances throughout the afternoon and evening in various Madison venues including this church. Plan to spend the day enjoying your neighbors, your town, your local businesses, and supporting local performers! At Grace Church, The Daughters of Zion and The Gargoyles will perform from 2:30-3PM.

See [www.madisonartsnj.org](http://www.madisonartsnj.org) for full schedule.



Saint Nicholas Mass

Sunday, December 3, 4PM

Join us as we celebrate the Feast of Saint Nicolas (transferred) in the sanctuary, followed by a Spectacular Advent reception in Grace Hall. We are particularly excited about two very special guests for the evening: Jolly ol' St Nick will be on hand passing out treats for children, and our very own Eric Donough will offer special Jazz music throughout the evening.

Advent Wreath-Making

December 3, following the  
St. Nicholas Mass at 4PM

On the first Sunday of Advent we will celebrate with Advent wreath-making — a fun intergenerational activity! Come create a beautiful wreath for your dining table. The church provides the fresh greens and supplies needed. Bring your candle ring if you have one!



A Gospel without Christmas

Bible Study with  
Father Asa

The Gospel according to Saint Mark is perhaps the oldest, and certainly most concise, account of Jesus' ministry, yet this book contains no record of Jesus' birth or childhood. Join us for Bible Study on Wednesdays as we explore where the Good News of Christmas may be found nestled among other stories of Christ's life.

Five-week Winter Bible Study  
November 29- December 27  
10:30AM in-person at Grace  
and 7PM via Grace Zoom.

BLUE CHRISTMAS

Wednesday, December 20, 7PM

Feeling a bit blue this Advent? Understandably, not everyone is excited for the Advent and Christmas seasons; dealing with the death of a loved one, facing life after divorce/separation, coping with the loss of a job, living with a dis-ease, or any number of other human situations. These and other life events can make the parties and joviality of this time of year painful for many people. At Grace we hope to give more attentiveness to the needs of people who are feeling blue in these winter months. This year we will be setting aside a special service for those who just need a space to pull away from the hustle and bustle of the secular season. Mother Susan and Father Asa invite you to join them for a prayer service of scripture and song.



## OUTREACH



We are collecting "tighty whities" for the prison inmates in the Morris County Correctional Facility. The correctional facility can only distribute white underwear, tee shirts and sports bras. The sizes large to 2XL are especially needed. **Undies For Advent** collection bin is in Nieman Annex, or can be ordered from Amazon Wishlist and delivered to Grace. This year, we will also be collecting colored underwear for clients served by **nourish.NJ**. Both white and colored underwear will be accepted until December 24.

*Thank you for your generosity and caring.  
Contact Mike Kostial if you have any questions.*



### Angel Tree

The Angel Tree s coming again this year. We will have a tree in Grace Lobby for you to choose a gift a tag to purchase a gift for a local service

charity. Gifts should be unwrapped gifts and dropped to the office. Watch for dates and details. Questions? Contact Hilary Tabish.



### Blood Drive

There is a critical need! Please help increase blood supplies by donating here at Grace on Monday, December 4, 1PM-7PM. Whole blood

can be donated every 56 day and since Grace hosts drives every two months, dedicated blood donors are eligible at all of our drives! Although walk-ins are welcome, it's best to make an appointment. Use your camera to sign up with the QR code.



## GROUPS & GATHERINGS

### Women of Grace Book Group

*Third Monday of the month  
7PM, Library.*

December 18: *Any 'banned' book:  
reader's choice—read, report*

January 22: *Tomorrow and  
Tomorrow and Tomorrow*  
by Gabrielle Zevin.

Come join the conversation!  
Contact: Judy Honohan  
jhonohan@mac.com

### Men's Book Group

*Third Tuesday of the month  
7:30PM at members' homes.*

December 19: join us as we discuss  
the *Dear Committee Members* by  
Julie Schumacher. All are welcome!

Contact: Bruce Rudin  
bruce.rudin82@gmail.com

### Men's Gathering

*Second Tuesday of the month,  
7PM, Library*

All men of Grace Church are  
invited to this monthly, in-person  
gathering for conversation,  
fellowship, and prayer.

### The Crafters

*Third Tuesday of the month,  
7PM, Crafters Room*

Bring your needlework, knitting,  
or other project to work in the  
company of other crafters.

### Circle of Women

*Fourth Tuesday of the month  
November 28, 7PM, Library*

All women of the community are  
welcome at our monthly gathering  
for shared conversation, support,  
laughter, snacks, and prayer. Next  
gathering is November 28.

Grace Church  
4 Madison Avenue  
Madison, NJ 07940



**GRACE CRUISE**  
**TOUR THE WORLD**  
WITHOUT LEAVING MADISON

**Ahoy!**

Grace Cruise Auction & Dinner on October 21 was a great success—and so much fun! Thank you to those who donated, organized, set up and make our biggest fundraiser such a success!

