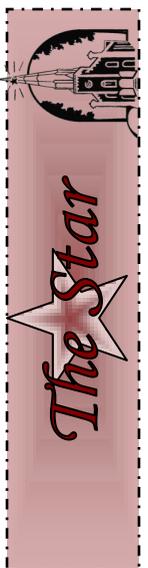


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The Church Spire will be illuminated



May 3 to the Glory of God and in loving memory of **Jennie Trepanier** by Theresa Jones.

May 10 to the Glory of God and in loving memory of **Betty Walker** by her loving husband, Alan, and family.

May 17 to the Glory of God and in loving memory of **Janet Fountain** by Michelle Fountain.

May 24 to the Glory of God and in loving memory of **Walt Malmgren** by the family and also in loving memory of **Richard Stack** by Jacquelyn Stack.

May 31 to the Glory of God and in loving memory of **Abby Kirk** by her sister and brothers, Dorothy Williams and Jan & Ken Acton.

The **STAR on the steeple** will be lit until further notice as a beacon of hope and peace for the Rutland community.

***If you would like to have the Church Spire lit in celebration or in the memory of a loved one, please contact the Church Office (775.4301). The cost for this is \$20.



The Church is closed but our hearts are open.

We miss being together with all of you! Please know that we are all in this together, and are praying daily for each and every one of you.

You should have received at least one call by now from a member of the congregation, checking in to see how you are doing.

Please let us know if you there is anything we can do to make these times easier.

Stay safe—Stay hopeful—Stay connected



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The Star



PUBLISHED FOR THE MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF GRACE CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, RUTLAND, VERMONT

Grace Church Hires a Short-Term Interim Minister

The Interim Search Committee is thrilled to announce that they have offered a short term ministerial position to The Rev. Holly Ross Noble. Holly lives in Tinmouth and has been hired to serve us for the months of May, June, and July. Holly has expressed an interest in helping Grace Church achieve some stability and to move forward during this uncertain time.

In view of the current Covid-19 situation, the Interim Minister Search Committee recommended that it would be in our best interest to hire a short-term Interim Minister to fulfill our needs. Our rationale included the difficulty in relocating someone to Vermont for the foreseeable future and having them get to know the congregation and our church from afar. This would also impact our ability to get to know them. We believed that hiring someone local who we know, and who knows us, seemed like the best solution for the short term.

The Interim Search Committee continues its search for an Interim Minister, with some viable candidates who could be available with it's safe to move here.

Spring Flowers and Spring Cleaning at Grace

Diane and Kit have been hard at work cleaning and organizing the downstairs offices. See below for a view of Beth's newly rediscovered desk surfaces and floor! The work has been very satisfying, especially since other "normal" office tasks are on hold for the time being. Looking forward to sharing these with you all again soon.



Holly Ross Noble, Our New Interim Minister, Introduces Herself



Many of you know me from my years working at the hardware store on North Main Street. However, that was one of my side jobs that I have held over the years. (I have also made hammocks in East Corinth, VT, substitute taught at Waits River Valley School, was a Lister for 6 years, and cleaned houses!)

I grew up in the Mid-Hudson Valley of New York State and graduated from Wells College in Aurora, NY in 1978. I graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1981 and was ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA) in 1982. I have two sons, Andrew and Mark. Andrew lives in Warnerville, NY with his daughter, Lena, and fiancée, Alisha, and her son, Slate. Mark lives in Wallingford, VT with his fiancée, Ana, and her two children, Briana and Kanen. In my spare time I love to knit (I always have a project going), play in my flower gardens, and yes, occasionally try to tackle the bagpipes. I have a black greyhound, Torque, who thinks he is a lap dog!

Over the almost 38 years of my ordained ministry in NY and Vermont, I have served mostly small churches and one medium-sized church. In many ways small churches are easier, because they know they need one another and by nature, **are** a community. In a larger church, community building has to be much more intentional. That is where I see my strengths; I am more of a people person than a numbers person. Although I recognize and greatly value the work of the Trustees and budget concerns, I feel most called to try to help people embody the message of Christ's love – in and out of the church. I have found in my ministry that if the emphasis is on the Gospel, everything else falls into place.

I preach sermons based (usually) on the lectionary reading(s) of the day, linking the Biblical text with everyday life. I feel one's faith is revealed in their life by what they do and say. I try to live my faith - in my relationships with people and in outreach to the world and I feel called to join with others in this quest, as we help one another in this journey.

As the "Interim" Interim at Grace Church, I will provide weekly services, working closely with your music ministries, giving a sense of stability for Sunday mornings and a mid-week homily/meditation whenever called upon to do so. I will be available for crisis ministry and day to day care as the pandemic allows. As is possible, I will provide pastoral care and coordinate outreach to members and friends of the church and the community. I feel this is something I have to offer your church at this time.



Summaries of Church Council Meetings

Council Meeting of March 26, 2020 (held via conference call)

Greg reviewed an eventful month. Services were held March 15, followed by a Council meeting where services were suspended until March 31. AA meetings were initially allowed but are now being held online. Some staff are working remotely, and Ken Willis will be in the building so it will not be vacant. Calls have been made to those most in need but will soon be made to everyone. The congregation has been kept up to date through Grace Good News, email, and phone. Sunday services are continuing with ministers hired for pulpit supply. Bills are being paid. Expenses are down. Committee work is being done by conference call and email. All care fund contributions have been sent to the mission.

Treasurer's report (Matt Getty): Beth Wolven has recovered and is working from home with remote access to Quickbooks and Church Office. Money is coming in and bills are being paid but there is no monthly report. Receipt of pledge income could become an issue during these uncertain times.

Wireless access in the building will be upgraded to include access points at the north end of the building and Fellowship Hall.

Grace Preschool status (Matt): Teachers and aides, under contract to May 22, will be laid off so they can apply for unemployment. Kit Wallace will send them a letter stating that they are unemployed. Sue Best will be the liaison with the Preschool Board. Laura Zmurko will also work with them.

Barb Kirk reported that the Interim Search Committee has interviewed 7 candidates and has agreed on a person. They will offer the position. Randy Kelly questioned adding someone to the payroll when our finances are uncertain. Matt replied that the money is in the budget and we can weather anything for a year. Opinions expressed showed the need to have someone in the minister position very soon.

Laura expressed that Personnel Committee wants to make sure the staff is covered as long as possible. The church supports the staff 100% and they will not be laid off.

Alastair Stout reported that the March 1 Benefit Concert raised \$550 for Fair Haven Concerned and the Youth Concert earned \$1600 for HEAL. Videos of services will observe copyright restrictions. The Rutland Area Chorus performance of *Carmina Burana* has been postponed.

Matt Getty suggested the church building be closed until further notice. All agreed. Sunday service videos and midweek recordings will demonstrate the Church is still alive. Phone calls will be made to all parishioners.

Mary Ashcroft questioned the scheduled blood drive. A motion was approved that the April 7 blood drive be cancelled, services be indefinitely suspended and all activities be postponed. A further motion passed that **worship services be held online only**.

Next meeting—Thursday, April 23