

# The Star



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

## *Grace Church Council Discusses Reopening*

Happy June everyone!

The Council and I hope you are all safe and making the most of what these difficult times present for us as Grace Church. We have much to be thankful for here in Vermont, with the effects of Covid-19 as minimal as they are. We need to keep near to our hearts and minds those among us who have lost so much with the passing of loved ones and suffering the ravages of this pandemic. In addition there is continued need for prayerful support for those with medical, emotional, and spiritual needs.

On a positive note, we are blessed with the spiritual leadership of the Reverend Holly Ross Noble, who continues her ministry among us on-line and by telephone. We thank her so much. In addition, Alastair, Diane, and Krista continue to be the backbone of what has become the standard for many churches – on-line presentations for Sunday worship, Wednesday Meditations, and Musical Moments.

The Council met on May 28, with the added task of trying to make sense of the timing for opening the church building. We had a lengthy discussion and decided to keep the church essentially closed for the time being until we can definitively put into place recommended sanitation and social distancing guidelines. It's a process that is very detailed, as you can imagine, and will not be met with 100% agreement. We are acting with an abundance of caution and concern for the health and wellbeing of all. When we do open for services and meetings, we want to be as safe as possible and do so with the least inconvenience to normal human contact. So stay tuned and we will update you as the "Reopening Plan" emerges, based upon consultation with staff and church leaders and committees.

As I write this article, I can report that the Interim Search Committee is very close to naming and hiring an interim minister. Pastor Holly has agreed to serve as long as it takes to bring on this person.

We will be attempting to conduct an annual program meeting as soon as possible – however, it will not be held on June 7th as previously noted. Look for the online version of the various committee reports soon via email or Grace Good News. We want to celebrate all that has occurred in this past program year. We are asking those committee members whose terms expire as of June 30th to stay on until the new slate of officers and committee members can be formally voted on.

Thank you to all who have taken the time to volunteer, to say a few words of thanks, and for being the loving congregation that I know you all are.

With deep gratitude for the chance to be Chair of Council,  
Greg Ellis

## A Word from our Pastor...



### Color Blind

When my older son was in kindergarten, I drove him to school every day since it was too far for a five year old to walk, but not so far that he could ride a school bus. We would stop by and pick up Vaughn, another little boy in kindergarten whose mother didn't drive. I would walk both boys into school and get them situated before returning home.

One morning I had delivered the boys to their classroom and was just about to leave, when I overheard Andrew tell his teacher that he was wearing a yellow sweatshirt and Vaughn was wearing a yellow sweatshirt – and he was wearing black sweatpants and Vaughn was wearing black sweatpants. His teacher then looked a bit puzzled (for effect) and asked Andrew, “How will I tell you boys apart today?” Andrew shook his head and replied, “I don't know, Miss Lawson!”

I walked away with a lump in my throat, thinking I had done something right... You see, Vaughn is  $\frac{1}{4}$  Native American and  $\frac{3}{4}$  black. I had raised a color blind son - and was so very proud of him.

In these turbulent times, I pray we all might become color blind and learn to treat everyone with the respect each deserves as a child of God.

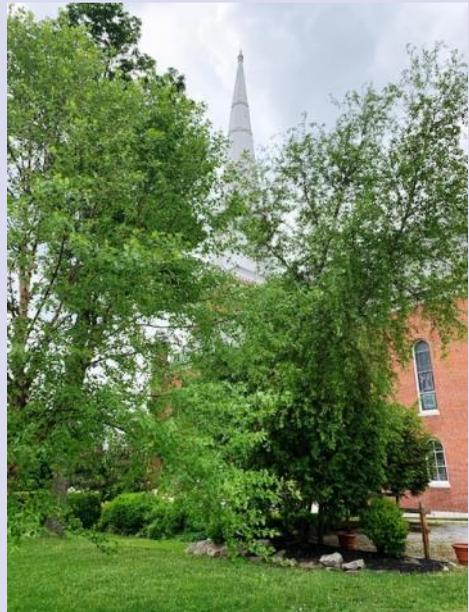
Don't you think God is color blind, too?

*Rev. Holly Ross Noble  
Interim Minister*

## Personnel Update

"June is bustin' out all over"....and we have received permission to bust out of our bubbles - safely. The Personnel Committee is meeting with all of our staff members to discuss Grace's "Reopening Plan". We will be reviewing topics such as cleaning routines, room usage, markers and reminders for social distancing, and safety protocol for staff and church building participants. We will be using the Vermont guidelines for reopening religious organizations safely.

Our Grace staff completed the Vermont State required online training for COVID-19 safety awareness in May. Each committee will be included in the "Reopening Plan" review. If you have an idea about how to move forward safely - we'd love to hear it! Email us at [ljcz4vt@yahoo.com](mailto:ljcz4vt@yahoo.com).



## Congratulations Graduates!! We are so proud of you!

**Emma Bartlett** graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Ecological Agriculture from UVM. (She finished in December but just got her diploma.) Emma is the daughter of Patty and Tim Bartlett.

**Brady Clark** graduated from Springfield High School and will attend St. Michael's College in the fall to study criminology and to play NCAA Division 2 baseball. Brady is the son of Tammy and Brett Clark and the grandson of Teresa Blake.

**Elizabeth Grace Geddes**, daughter of William G. Geddes and Jennifer Kelly Geddes of New York, graduated from Occidental College in Los Angeles. She is the granddaughter of Bonnie and Randy Kelly.

**Elisha Gilman**, son of Lea Gilman and grandson of Lisa and David Gilman, is graduating from Rutland High School and is headed to the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, NY.

**Daniel Graves** is graduating from Mill River High School and will attend Brown University in the fall, studying environmental science. Daniel is the son of Jim Graves and Kathy Doyle.

**Jakob Edward Hochberg**, grandson of Kathy Taylor, is graduating from Fair Haven Union High School and will be entering Castleton University in the fall.

**Erika Mead**, granddaughter of Diana Robinson, is graduating from Rutland High and will be attending St. Michael's College in the fall.

**Evan Mead**, grandson of Diana Robinson, is graduating from Rutland High and will be attending Rutgers University in the fall.

**Aine Powers**, granddaughter of David and Carolyn Hazen, graduated from Holliston High School in Massachusetts, and will be attending Middlebury College in the fall.

**Kyle Reardon**, son of Tim and Sandi Reardon, is graduating from the University of Oregon in June with a PhD in Special Education.

**Lauren Reardon** graduated with honors on May 9, 2020 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Care Administration from Champlain College. Lauren is the daughter of Sandi and Tim Reardon.

**Samuel I. Roberts**, son of Cara and Carl Roberts and grandson of Fred and Lana Bates, graduated from North Country Union High School in Newport, VT.

**Stefanie Schaffer**, daughter of Stacy and Paul Bender and granddaughter of JoAnn Richardson, graduated Magna Cum Laude with a B.S. in Health Promotion from Castleton University. Her term ended in December, and graduation was to have been held in May.

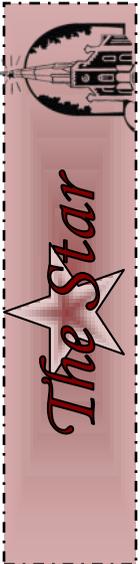
**Olivia Weeden**, granddaughter of David and Carolyn Hazen, graduated from Saratoga Springs High School and will be attending American University in Washington, D.C. in the fall.

**Lea Grace Zmurko**, daughter of Matthew Zmurko and Laura Coppola Zmurko, will graduate from Rutland High School on June 11th as part of a video ceremony. Lea will head to Penn State in University Park, PA this fall, where she plans to study Meteorology.



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### The Church Spire will be illuminated



**June 7** to the Glory of God and in loving memory of **Mary Lee Johnson**  
by Pat and Morris Tucker

**June 14** to the Glory of God and in loving memory of **Florence Beebe** by her loving daughter, Marjorie Candon.

**June 21** to the glory of God.

**June 28** to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Alex, Barbara and Philip Nash by their family

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

We thank **Naomi Adams, Barbara Densmore, and Mary Wilkins** for contributing to this mission.

\*\*\*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.

Our **Sunday services** are still broadcast at 11:30 AM and 10:30 PM on PEG TV but **the channel has changed**: it is now 1075.

You can access the YouTube videos of the services any time via the Grace Church website ([www.gracechurchvt.org](http://www.gracechurchvt.org)) or the Grace Church facebook page @GraceChurchVT.



### Summer Church Office Hours

(Memorial Day through Labor Day)

Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.