

The Star



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

Grace Church Welcomes Rev. Dr. Alberta C. Wallace!

The Interim Search Committee is pleased (actually excited) to announce the Rev. Dr. Alberta Wallace as our interim pastor.

Alberta is a trained interim minister with 18 years in the ministry. She comes to us most recently from the First Congregational Church of Wakefield, New Hampshire. She has an extensive educational background with a degree in Sociology and Psychology, a Masters in Social Work, and many levels of ministerial training, culminating in a Doctorate of Ministry focusing on leadership development and transitional ministry for churches.

Alberta has given me permission to use her words as a way of introduction:

“I am an African American female raised in the Black Baptist tradition leading in a predominantly white progressive denomination. I am here because I know God created us to die empty, filled with knowledge that God’s love was shared and emptied in many places and with many people.”

“I am passionate for churches in the “in between” times, those times after a pastor leaves and before they call their new pastor. The “in between” times require a shepherd who can console - naming the many emotions members may be experiencing and prod them to embrace their new season with a prayerful plan to identify their next pastoral partner. I strongly believe the transition period is an opportune time for the church to reflect on the past, heal from the past and acknowledge how God has worked with them to serve one another, the community and the wider world, celebrate the gifts born and ministries launched and dream with eyes wide open accepting and acknowledging “God is doing a new thing” in their midst. My passion is for the church to be relevant and authentic for their community and the community they serve.”

Alberta will begin with us on August 10. Our committee worked hard, meeting regularly, and interviewing and zooming with many applicants. We had lively discussions, knowing how important this time is and knowing that we needed the Right person. We kept saying, “We’ll know it when the right person comes along.” Once we met Alberta we knew! Our follow-up conversations and interviews only reinforced our belief that we have made the right decision. Join us in welcoming her in worship on Sunday, August 16.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Kirk, on behalf of the Interim Search Committee

(See page 2 for Alberta’s own introduction.)



GREETINGS FROM OUR NEW INTERIM MINISTER

Hello, my sisters and brothers of Grace Congregational Church UCC-Rutland, VT!

You are brave, resourceful, and committed to spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. Why else would you call a transitional care minister during a global health pandemic to guide you in seeing how your past has provided the steppingstones for your future? Only brave people can stand naked in the mirror and see the beauty in the imperfections.

When Wendy (my partner) and I received the tour of the church, a member of the Interim Search Committee (Diane) looked at me and said I was the only candidate they did not interview face-to-face. She then said, we decided to take a leap of faith. I responded (with a little hop) - then we will leap into this journey together. That is what an intentional interim minister does; joins you on your journey and guides you to hear from God anew and to see yourselves as God sees you.

Blessings, my sisters, and brothers in Christ! We know God is still speaking. Let us prepare to hear and see what God has for Grace Congregational UCC in this new world order.

Wendy and I have made our home in Bomoseen after leaving New Hampshire where I completed my last intentional interim call. I arrived in New England from Arizona where I lived for 10 years. The Midwest is where I was raised and educated. My seminary training was guided by the professors at Central Baptist Theological Seminary, an American Baptist USA affiliated educational institution with strong ecumenical partnerships located in Shawnee, Kansas. There, I earned the Master's in Divinity and Doctorate in Ministry.

My first call to ministry was in social work. At the University of Kansas, I completed the Master's in Social Work with emphasis in Administration.

God has been preparing me for over 20 years and continues to prepare me to walk alongside the people of God in the "in-between" times: after a long-term settled pastor has ended their service to the gathered body of Christ.

The gifts of assessment, pastoral care, preaching, teaching, administration, and leadership development are a few of the hats God has given me to wear. I continue to add to my "gift box" and God continues to reveal how the gifts that have been given can be shared wastefully.

Thank you, Grace Congregational Church UCC of Rutland, VT for inviting me to join you at this sacred time in the life of this church. Let us join our arms together (virtually as we are in the season of physical distancing) and leap, hop, and pray to the new music God is writing for you to move to.

Pastor Alberta

Team Effort by Holly Ross

It doesn't take much to figure out that I don't play sports – nor have I ever. (Table tennis/ping pong is the only sport in gym class I even half-liked; and if you ever see me running, look behind me because something must be chasing me.) However, I like the camaraderie of being on a team. Once Alastair Stout started up handbell choir rehearsals again, I volunteered to be a substitute for anyone who was away on vacation. Although I haven't played bells in a while and I depend on my notes being colored coded, I enjoy being part of the group. We all have to work together to create harmony. It's the team experience I never had in high school!



As my time with Grace Church is coming to a close (my last Sunday is August 9). I have to say that I have also enjoyed being part of the Grace ministry team. These are trying times, to say the least, but many people have stepped up to share their time and talents. We have been sharing worship on Peg TV and online and offering mid-week meditations and musical pieces. There are so many people to thank, I dare not even start to list names – from those reading Scripture to those playing special musical pieces and everything in-between. Be assured that your help in reaching out to our church family and community is greatly appreciated. Personally I want to thank all the staff, committees, and volunteers who have worked together to further the ministry and mission of the church.

I will continue to hold Grace Church in my heart and in my prayers as you envision your future, being a beacon of light and hope to our community.

Pastor Holly



We are Looking for Knitters!

A Prayer Shawl is a gift to someone, to “wrap” them in prayers and bring them love, comfort, and strength. Many blessings and prayers are knit into each shawl as they are made and then they are blessed during a worship service. If you know of someone who would benefit from a shawl please contact the Office (775.4301).

The Prayer Shawl Ministry group next meets on **Wednesday, August 12 at 9:30 a.m.** We would love to have you join us on this date or on the second Wednesday of each month for an hour or so to knit, crochet, and pray. We have yarn, needles, and patterns or bring your own. Want to learn? We will teach you! For more information please call Marty Barclay at 802.775.1076.



Adapting to the Pandemic

Now that we are in the middle of Phase 3 of our reopening, it might be helpful to explain where we are on that path. On **June 28**, Grace Church reopened for in-person worship in the Sanctuary only. Since that time, between 60 and 86 people have attended services, all wearing masks, practicing social distancing, and refraining from singing. Although the experience is not the same as it used to be, it is nonetheless very meaningful as members can come together again to worship and share fellowship from 6 feet. Rev. Holly, Alastair, and Diane have been creative in their planning, messages, and music, and services are still available on PEG TV and online at www.gracechurchvt.org and on Facebook @GraceChurchVt. We hope that we are meeting the needs of most of our congregation; please contact any staff member with suggestions about other ways in which we might help foster a sense of community.

On **July 13**, Chapel services resumed and we opened the church building to small outside groups. Attendance at Chapel is down, but those who come are grateful for the opportunity. Prior to the pandemic, we hosted 8 AA meetings per week. Six of those have resumed, which is about all we can handle with our safety and cleaning protocol requiring 48 hours between uses of the same room. Ken is in the process of hiring a helper to streamline that cleaning process. A few church committees have met on-site, including the Council, Property, Prayer Shawl, Bible Study, Bells, and the Spiritual Growth Committee. Most others are meeting off-site or via zoom. We are open to hosting other groups and meetings, but space is at a premium (in this huge building!) given our need for a 48 hour room quarantine.

We are keeping the congregation informed of news via our Sunday bulletins and announcements, monthly STAR, and weekly Grace Good News (GGN) emails. If you are not receiving GGN, please email Kit and she will add you to the list (kit@gracechurchvt.org).

All in all, the Grace Church family is adapting well to these pandemic days. We are thrilled at the way Holly has stepped in to take on the role of the interim interim minister, with her humor, energy, and boundless faith. Her last Sunday will be August 9, and we hope that you will join us in wishing her well. The following week we will welcome Pastor Alberta as our Interim Minister, and our unsettled times should become less so with such an accomplished leader. Stay tuned to hear about the ways in which we will say farewell to Holly and welcome to Alberta.

Stay safe. Stay hopeful. Stay connected.



Make a Joyful Noise Unto the Lord.

Summer Offerings from the Music Department

Travelogue—Missionary Trips around the World
Dr. Jim Wright
Wednesday, August 12, 7 PM, Fellowship Hall

Join Jim Wright as he shares slides and stories about his missionary work as a dentist. His first missionary journey began in 1980-1981 with the Gilley's in Swaziland, sponsored by Grace Church. Since then, Jim has made a total of nine dental missionary trips to Cambodia and Honduras. He will speak about their cultural differences, economic problems, and medical dental needs.



Family Event—Grace Steeple Chase
Saturday, August 22, 9 AM to Noon

Join the Grace Steeple Chase with your family and friends! Solve the clues to find sacred and historic places and spaces in Rutland. Get your miles in by walking or by car.

This scavenger hunt is meant for all ages and can be done in teams of family or close friends with whom you regularly associate (keeping safety in mind). The Music and Spiritual Growth Committees offer this excursion into puzzling clues and fantastic finds to make your spirit sing! Stay tuned for more instructions.

Helping Our Neighbors

Last year Grace gathered jars of peanut butter and jelly to donate to local food cupboards. This year, in light of the pandemic but conscious of an urgent need for food, the physical drive has been replaced with a **PB&Jam Summer Slam Donor Drive**. By participating virtually and making a monetary donation, you will allow the food shelves to purchase what they need directly from the Vermont Foodbank. To register to participate or for more information, please contact Dan Warnecke from United Way of Rutland County (dan@uwrutlandcounty.org) or Anna White from the Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging (SVCOA) (awhite@svcoa.net). Let's get Grace involved!!



ON-GOING WEEKLY EVENTS

SUNDAY

8:30 Chapel Service
10:00 Sanctuary Service

MONDAY

8:00 AA
5:30 AA
6:30 Bells rehearsal

TUESDAY

5:00 AA Women's Group
7:00 AA Men's Group

WEDNESDAY

8:00 AA
8:00 Prayer Group
9:30 Bible Study
11:30 Staff Meeting

FRIDAY

8:00 AA

AA- Alcoholics Anonymous



AUGUST EVENTS & MEETINGS

Sun, Aug. 2, 8:30 and 10 AM—Communion;
Food Shelf Sunday

Wed, Aug. 5, 8:30 AM—Property Committee

Aug. 8 & 9, 11 AM—Art in the Park

Sun, Aug. 9, 8:30 and 10 AM—Rev. Holly's
last Sunday

Wed, Aug 12, 9:30 AM—Prayer Shawl, Parlor

Wed, Aug. 12, 7:00 PM—Travelogue

Sun, Aug. 16, 8:30 and 10 AM—Pastor
Alberta's first Sunday

Sat, Aug. 22, 9 AM—Grace Steeple Race

Thurs, Aug. 27, 6 PM—Council



SPECIAL MISSION OFFERING: *STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH* SUNDAY, AUGUST 23

The Strengthen the Church offering supports the expansion of ministry and growth of UCC local congregations. Your support of this offering will help the UCC fulfill its commitment to creating a just world for all by investing in new ministries and practices that meet the emerging needs of local communities.

As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches, and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults.



**Chaffee Art Center's
59th Annual Art in the Park**
Sat., Aug. 8: 11 AM-7 PM
Sun., Aug. 9: 11 AM-4 PM
Main Street Park

All are invited to attend this Summer Festival featuring juried fine artists, craftspeople, and specialty food producers. More treats: food vendors, live demonstrations, and live music. A voluntary donation is appreciated. Masks are required, and social distancing will be adhered to. Volunteers are needed! Email info@chaffeeartcenter.org or call 802.775.0356. See you there!

Spiritual Growth at Grace Church



As reported in the July STAR, the congregation voted by a large margin to support displaying the Black Lives Matter flag at Grace Church. It is now proudly in place, and this photo captures three important values of our church:

God is still speaking
Black Lives Matter
Love in Action

In the fall, the Spiritual Growth Committee will continue the conversation about racial justice and Christian values. We hope that you will engage with others in this vital conversation. As Lynn Bujnak, Conference Minister of the Vermont UCC writes:

We engage in this work because we are aware that it is God's work. We witness to the work of the One who made all in the Divine Image and pronounced humanity in all its wondrous diversity good. Throughout the pages of the Bible we see God's favor falling on the ones most mistreated and despised by their society. Through Biblical narrative and the lives of countless Christians we understand that the work of social justice is holy work and when we engage in that work, we are standing on Holy Ground.



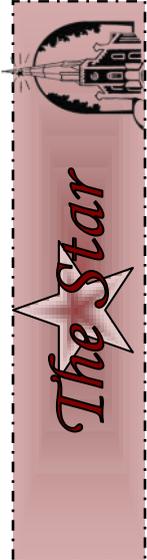
Children and Youth Ministry News

Now that in-person worship has returned successfully, the Children and Youth Ministry is thinking about resuming church school in the fall. At this point, we are planning on starting September 20, the first Sunday after Homecoming. The plan is to keep to the twice per month schedule of last year. Church school will follow public school protocols so as to provide a healthy, safe, fun, and spiritual experience for all participants. We will coordinate with Pastor Alberta on curriculum once she is settled in to her new position. See the September STAR for more about Youth programs.

If you are interested in volunteering, or who would like more information, please contact Holly Getty (hngetty@gmail.com). We look forward to seeing you in September.

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Grace Church Memorials The Sanctuary and Chapel Flower Memorials



August 2 to the Glory of God and in loving memory of **Charles Velasquez** by the Velasquez and Stager families.

August 9 to the Glory of God and in loving memory of **Jean Hayward** by Ken Hart.

August 16 to the Glory of God and in celebration of the arrival of **Rev. Dr. Alberta C. Wallace** as our Interim Minister.

August 23 to the Glory of God and in loving memory of **Lucile K. and Edward W. Curtis** by their family.

August 30 to the Glory of God.

Please note: If you would like to have a flower memorial in memory of a loved one or for a special celebration, please contact David Hazen (483.2337/peren@aol.com).

The Church Spire will be illuminated

August 2 to the Glory of God.

August 9 to the Glory of God and in loving memory of **Isabelle and Eldred Ross** by Rev. Holly Ross.

August 16 to the Glory of God.

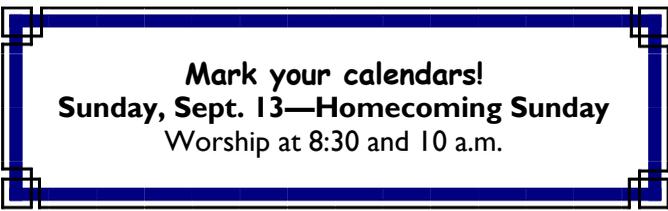
August 23 to the Glory of God and in loving memory of **Charlie E. Jones** by his wife Ruth and family.

August 30 to the Glory of God.

The Star on the steeple is lit as a beacon of hope and peace for the Rutland community.

We thank **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.



Mark your calendars!
Sunday, Sept. 13—Homecoming Sunday
Worship at 8:30 and 10 a.m.