



# Grace Church

Millbrook, NY

The Rev. Dr. Matthew Calkins, Rector  
“Deep Roots, Open Doors”



## ANNUAL MEETING

## JANUARY 18, 2026

## Table of Contents

Agenda	3
Nominating Committee Report	4
Rector's Report/Worship Report	5-7
Warden's Report	8-10
Treasurer's Report	11-12
2025 Financials	13-16
Stewardship and Budget Report	17-18
2026 Budget	19-21
Property Report	22
Fundraising	23-25
<u>Ministry Reports</u>	
Music	26-27
Bible Study and Wednesday Eucharist Service Report	27
Altar Guild	28
Worship Volunteers & Formation Report	29-30
Grace Archives and Theology on Tap	31
Sunday School	32
Millbrook Community Pre-school at Grace	33-36
Food Outreach Report	37
Invite, Welcome, Connect	38
Cornerstone Consultancy Report	39-40
Prayers	41

# **AGENDA**

CALL TO ORDER

OPENING PRAYER AND WELCOMING REMARKS

RECOGNITION OF QUORUM

ELECTION OF VESTRY MEMBERS AND WARDEN

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

RECEPTION OF MINISTRY REPORTS

BUDGET AND STEWARDSHIP PRESENTATION

NEW BUSINESS

BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

## **Nominating Committee Report**

We thank these members and officers who have fulfilled their terms:

Barbara Rudy, Warden (fulfilling Evelyn Garzetta 2nd term)

Lisa Lacey, Vestry, 2 terms

Amanda Williams, Vestry, 2 terms

The Vestry nominates the following members for election:

Marli Higa, Warden, 1st term

Will Cox, Vestry, 2nd term

Matt Latvis, Vestry, 1st term

Chris Wilson, Vestry, 1st term

Bill Taylor, Diocesan Delegate

Susan Nestel, Diocesan Delegate

## Rector's Report 2025

Lorne Richmond Jr., a self-described church nerd (that's the name of his blog), writes that a denominational leader once told him they "weren't in the property management business." "Friends" he replied, "that's the absolutely wrong attitude. Buildings aren't just assets. **They're witnesses.**"

This strikes me as certainly true about our beloved Grace Church. Since the cornerstone was set in 1901, with the completed sanctuary consecrated on October 15, 1902—a 125th anniversary date we will celebrate this year and next—Grace Church and its people have been not only part of the fabric of Millbrook and the surrounding region, but witnesses to history, to the power of prayer, and to the promise of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

That's good news indeed in a time when the world is going through a stormy transition from the post-war world order to something yet to be determined—with wars and disorder along the way. When our country is polarized and friends and neighbors fear sudden deportation. And when long established norms and habits—including church membership and attendance—are caught in a cultural tempest that shows little sign of abating.

But our bishop is clear: the story of the Episcopal Church in New York is not a story of decline, but renewal. We are in the resurrection business. And we will care for each other, worship God, proclaim the gospel, and serve our neighbors in need as we always have.

With that bracing message in mind, let me report on what happened here at Grace in the year of our Lord 2025.

Our core work is worship and Christian formation. At the bottom of this report are the numbers of services and attendees to our various services of Eucharist, as well as a report from Lori Morrith, a regular at our Bible study and mid-week Eucharist service. Once a month I lead this same service for residents of the Fountains, some of whom also attend regularly at Grace. James Ruff reports on the amazing music program he is leading here—with the hope that more people will participate both as musicians and attendees for our special musical services. We have also hosted a number of events sponsored by the Millbrook Music Salon, as well as the annual First Night performances. Our Sanctuary and Parish Hall are increasingly centers for music and the arts.

Education is for all ages. Our dedicated teachers offer instruction for younger children every Sunday and this year we had 8 young readers go through our Holy Communion class and double that number participate in our Christmas pageant. These included children from the Preschool, which continues to offer outstanding service to the community under the direction of Maureen Sarma. We are indebted once again to the Dyson Foundation for supporting a generous scholarship program that ensures that all

parents and children who want to attend the Community Preschool may do so at an affordable cost.

I am personally indebted to Ben York, now a postulant for holy orders and soon to go off to seminary, for help in coordinating volunteers to serve as lay readers, chalice bearers, ushers and coffee hour hosts—and thanks to all who do this work. Susan Quigley does a great job leading our Altar Guild, all of whom show up with great faithfulness. Ben, Marli Higa and Will Cox received training as lay Eucharistic visitors—we hosted a regional training led by Archdeacon Denise Lavetty. Ben and Marli often offered personal prayer during Sunday services after communion, an act of blessing for whoever felt in the need of a consoling word. Ben and Will joined me in leading adult education offerings during Lent and Advent, and Will has begun hosting a Theology on Tap informal group on Thursday nights at Julian's. Marli sparked a true “moment of Grace” with her invitation for Thanksgiving at Grace, a potluck feast many enjoyed.

The financial and stewardship reports will note that we had a good year financially. The Vestry, under the able leadership of wardens Bill Taylor and Barbara Rudy, the steady long term oversight of our Treasurer Cathy Shanks, and the back office work of David Swift and Marilyn Schiller, has diligently worked on creating a diverse stream of income sources while prudently managing the expenses and labor involved in running this busy little church. Bill has a broad vision of stewardship and the church's possible future that is discussed in his Warden's Report. Special thanks to Barbara for filling in for Evelyn Garzetta's remaining term—and we pray for her continuing recovery, who for so many years led Grace Immigrant Outreach. The property report will tell of the many hands helping maintain and improve the campus, but I want to particularly thank Molly Hurley for spearheading several projects, including the landscape design, repainting and other projects.

Our calendar included several fun social events —thanks in a large measure to ideas of Amanda Williams and the Invite Welcome Connect committee. You will see reports on several of our great fund raisers—thanks to James Prudden and ML Ball for their work on the golf and dinner benefit—along with so many others—and to Pam Freeman Janelle Style, Lisa and John Lacy, Lynda Boisse, Janelle Styles, and so many others working on the Whale of a Sale and the St Nicholas Bazaar. Lisa and Cathy have been working also on extending sales of used furniture well past the rummage sale. All of these fundraisers are not only a source of funding but an opportunity for fellowship and an introduction to our church for those participating.

We continue to reach out to those in need through food programs— thanks to ML Ball for coordinating a group to unload the trucks and Barbara for being a key coordinator at the Food Pantry in Amenia; John and Lisa continue to lead a group serving lunch at the Lunchbox once a month. Grace is part of a diocesan and regional effort to provide sanctuary, legal aid and in person accompaniment to our neighbors navigating the immigration crisis.

Our communication team continues to get out the good news. ML Ball ably assembles our weekly newsletter, Pam Freeman updates the website, Kurt Pragman manages our online streaming and video archives. With a hand on all of these efforts (and helping teach Sunday School too), Marilyn Schiller has managed a steep learning curve and is doing great as parish administrator (not an easy job, for it includes trying to keep me organized, among many other things).

Chris Wilson and Freddie Cruz, the principals of Cornerstone Consultancy, did a strategic Mustard Seed Assessment of Grace Church in 2025, thanks to a grant from Dyson Foundation. This work will continue to inform the Vestry as we move into 2026. Chris, a member of the congregation along with his wife Kima and their two beautiful children, is coming on to the Vestry and I look forward to working with him and Matt Latvis as new Vestry members (with Will Cox up for a second term), and Marli Higa as a new warden. It should be a good year as we celebrate the 125th anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone of our beautiful church.

New stained-glass windows, a long term project, came to completion in a dedication ceremony in October 2025. Bishops Alan Shin and Doug Fisher were part of the ceremony, along with members of the Johnson family. The artist Chris Gerbi did the drawings, and the Beyer Studio, made and installed the windows. Thanks to all of the many people who gave for this memorial—the list is long. God willing, these windows honoring Charles Johnson, Eleanor Roosevelt and St Julian of Norwich will stand as witness of courage, righteousness and faith long after I and all of those mentioned here have gone to our reward. But while we are here, and active stewards of our church, may we all continue to do the work God has given us to do, to love and serve God and the world as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord (Book of Common Prayer, 366).

### **Worship Report 2025**

93 Sunday Eucharist services over 52 Sundays, total attendance 2949,  
average Sunday attendance 57 (not including online), up from ASA 54 in 2024.  
Holy Week services included Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Vigil  
Easter attendance (including Vigil): 185  
Christmas Eve and Christmas Day attendance: 199  
Annual interfaith Blessing our Sacred Earth service at Innisfree Garden, May 18, 2025  
Evensong and Lessons and Carols services led by James Ruff  
51 Wednesday midday Eucharists, including 10 at the Fountains  
12 baptisms: Keegan Campion, Josephine Privette, Kelsey and Aubrey Morris, Portia  
and Thalia Vallarino, Hayley Cimms, Caden Weller, Kaia Williams, Wren Kozlowski,  
Bradley Thornton, Winston Manning, Penelope Mendoza  
7 burials: Byron Bunch, George Galindo, Alex Blue, Eleanor Laursen, Sarah Carlin,  
Joseph and Demian Virgilio (internment of ashes in memorial Garden)

Active clergy: Matthew Calkins, rector; priest associates (retired) Elliott Lindsley and Michael Shafer; visiting clergy Molly O'Neil Frank and Alison Quin.

Respectfully submitted, The Rev. Dr. Matthew Calkins, Rector

## Warden's Report

As Wardens, we celebrate the many ways that the ministries of Grace Church have touched the lives of so many during this past year. In doing so, we would like to emphasize the important role that stewardship has played in the success of the past year in the many aspects of church life. Stewardship is about caring for what has been entrusted to us so that we can pass this care and trust along to those who will come after us. The Grace Church community embraces stewardship, and the parish is stronger as a result. Most importantly, this stewardship directly impacts and invigorates the worship and spiritual experience that has drawn us all to Grace Church under the excellent leadership of Father Matt.

We would like to particularly commend the impactful work of Father Matt this past year. His distinctive approach to spiritual and pastoral leadership distinguishes the parish life at Grace Church. Moreover, his broad sense of the Church's role in the larger community ensures that the focus on stewardship is something that is not confined to the parish alone.

In many ways, Grace Church has been a steward to Millbrook and, indeed, to Dutchess County as a whole. Not only do our parishioners reside over a large span of the county, our programs also have an equally wide reach of impact. Locally, the Church, through its partnership with the pre-school, continues to make a meaningful impact on the lives of young children in the community, providing them with a safe, spirit-filled place to learn and grow in their earliest years.

Furthermore, this focus on helping to steward the lives of young people in the community was evident throughout the year. There has been a noticeable increase in baptisms over the past several years and an increase in the number of children who attend church services and the available Sunday School programming from our dedicated teachers. This past Christmas also saw the triumphant return of our long-cherished Christmas Pageant which highlighted the spirited engagement of the children in our midst. Additionally, the parish hall has been used to provide space for other groups that offer events for local teens, thus ensuring that Grace remains focused on the next generation of the children of God.

Similarly, Grace Church's long-standing partnership with the community at The Fountains ensures that this stewardship of the ministry of the church is impactful to those in their later years of life as well. Parishioner Marli Higa has been particularly passionate about this specific ministry which brings life, meaning, and comfort to many.

Whether it is through engaging our own community-based events, being an active participant in community events organized by others or providing space for clinicians to offer mental and emotional health resources, Grace functions as a spiritual steward to many lives and needs in our midst. As importantly, Grace extends this ministry outward into the larger community through its work with the food pantry, the Poughkeepsie Lunchbox, and other initiatives that are created to address unforeseen yet timely needs in our community.

This past year saw important stewardship efforts taken to enhance the church itself. The installation of the three new stained-glass windows represents a significant act of stewardship toward the future of Grace Church. Highlighting Charles Johnson, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Dame Julian of Norwich, the installation of these windows articulates the role that faith and service play in the life, health, and vitality of the common good. This commitment has been a through-line of stewardship of Grace Church throughout most of its history, and these windows continue this statement of faith into the future.

Outside of the sanctuary, the appearance and protection of the church property was improved by the necessary work to remove trees from encroaching on physical structures of the property, including the sanctuary itself. This work, combined with the beautiful new entrance sign created by Matt Latvis, resulted in a renewed visual engagement with the Church from parishioners and visitors alike while also working to protect the integrity of the overall property. Similarly, the use of the Vicarage as a rental property this past year and the addition to Will Cox's residency in the Rectory have provided greater stability and presence to the larger church campus which enhances both the resources and engagement of the church.

This past year also saw the parish initiate a strategic visioning assessment through the work of Cornerstone Consultancy's *Mustard Seed Assessment*. This important work identified the many strengths of Grace Church, especially in the context of its stewardship of the larger community. Of related significance, this assessment also provides the parish with a roadmap forward of how to leverage these strengths to promote further growth and stability for the future of Grace Church.

Much work was also done to broaden the church community's understanding of the pervasive role and impact that stewardship plays in the short and long-term financial needs of the church. This past year saw many parishioners complete pledge cards or commit to a yearly gift to the church. Commitments such as these are vital as they allow the church to plan for its budgeted needs for the coming year. There were additional generous contributions through grants and other gifts that allowed the church to end the fiscal year on solid ground.

In the coming year, this broad understanding of stewardship, including its financial implications, will continue to be a focal point for the parish as we work to ensure that its future is sound for the short and long-term. To that end, there is necessary work that must be done on the heating and cooling systems in the church sanctuary. If this work had not been done by others in the past, we would not have been able to comfortably gather as we have these past years. We owe this same commitment to stewardship, not only for our use in the short term but for those who will worship here in future years.

We will also continue to sharpen our focus on ways to broaden our outreach to the larger community as well as to expand our base of parishioners. In doing so, we will continue to explore ways to strengthen our pledging base as we further enhance our outreach ministries that have attracted so many of us to Grace over the years. Both are integrally related to one another.

As we move forward into the coming year, we will be lifted by God's spirit that emanates from this church and its parishioners in manifold ways. We will be fortified by the blessings that are to be found in God's grace which pervades this church community in its vitality. Through the journey ahead, we will expand upon the stewardship that has been done by past parishioners to enable us to be responsible stewards to those in the future who will find that same peace, community, and vitality that comes from being a part of Grace Church.

Faithfully,

Barbara Rudy

William W. Taylor

## TREASURER'S REPORT

The financial information in this packet is presented as of yearend 2025, as well as the Vestry approved operating budget for 2026. In addition, information on our restricted accounts and investment fund balances is also provided.

Total operating income from our various sources is shown and the total is just over \$403,000. Our main source of income comes from Pledges, Plate and Regular Support. I would like to thank all of you who give regularly to this main source of support. We are very fortunate to continue to receive grant support from the Dyson Foundation and the Millbrook Tribute Garden. I would also like to thank all of you who gave generously at the end of the year with either memorial gifts or other donations. We ended 2025 in a very strong position.

We were once again very thankful for being able to hold our golf and dinner benefit at the Millbrook Golf & Tennis Club. It was not only a fun night honoring Jean Hayes and Betsy Shequine, but we also raised over \$32,000. Also in 2025, we were extremely fortunate to have another outstanding Rummage Sale with total income showing over \$11,000. At the Holiday Sale, vendor spaces were sold out and had to be extended to the stage area. Once again there were no homemade cookies left to sell. The event was a huge success. I want to thank each and every one that helped to make these three fund raisers not only possible, but so successful. We come together to raise money for the Church but while doing so build a deep bond amongst ourselves. We also meet so many new people at these events, it is incredible. It is a win, win all around.

The income from Programs is from our very successful Preschool. Maureen and her teachers have grown this program over the years and continue to enhance the lives of so many children. The smiles on the children's faces are infectious.

We are still renting space in the Parish Hall to a therapy organization and that has been working out very well. You will also see a new line under income, titled "transfer from Vicarage and or Rectory". We are now renting the Vicarage on a full-time basis and even with putting the property back on the tax rolls, income will be more than expenses. We are budgeting a portion of this into our operating budget with the remainder being left in the restricted account for maintenance. We continue to have someone in the Rectory who is overseeing our "clergy retreat rental". While we also put this income into the restricted account for maintenance, we do have the ability to pull excess cash from here as well.

On the expense side, we continue to do an excellent job keeping expenses in line. A few line items went over budget, but not by much. You will see an increase in ground expenses. Most of this increase was for the removal and pruning of some of our many trees, as well as repairs made to playground equipment. A grant of \$3,000 was

received to cover a portion of this increased expense. I am pleased to report that the bottom line for 2025 shows a positive \$13,771.

The Vestry approved 2026 budget does show a projected small deficit. We will continue to monitor and make any adjustments as needed.

In addition to this financial report, I would like to mention we had both of our air conditioning/supplemental heating units go out at the end of the summer season. We have signed a contract to put in new units and currently have received a small grant from the Diocese for this work. We will most likely move excess cash into the capital improvement restricted fund to help pay for this necessary upgrade.

I would like to thank David and Marilyn for all they do to assist me in my role as Treasurer. They do a great job for Grace Church.

Let us never forget, we are all part of the little Church that sits at the top of Franklin Avenue, that does so much.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cathy Shanks

Grace Episcopal Church - Millbrook NY  
Treasurer's Report as of December 2025 for Unrestricted General Fund

Saturday, January 3, 2026

Page 1 of 3

Account Name	YTD Balance	Previous YTD	Annual Budget	% of Annual Budget
<b>Income</b>				
Plate	11,067	11,255	10,000	111
Pledge	132,072	130,962	140,000	94
Regular Support Donations	22,446	10,320	10,000	224
<b>3. PLEDGE, PLATE, SUPPORT</b>	<b>\$165,586</b>	<b>\$152,537</b>	<b>\$160,000</b>	<b>103</b>
Dyson Grant	75,000	75,000	75,000	100
Tribute Garden Donation	10,000	0	15,000	67
<b>Grant Income</b>	<b>\$85,000</b>	<b>\$75,000</b>	<b>\$90,000</b>	<b>94</b>
Fundraising - Golf	32,281	35,396	25,000	129
Fundraising - Holiday Sale Inc.	3,761	4,176	4,000	94
Fundraising - Jewelry Sales	0	240	250	0
Fundraising - Rummage Sale	11,287	11,645	7,500	150
Fundraising - Shady Knoll	0	710	500	0
Fundraising Other	159	(15)	0	0
<b>Fundraising Income</b>	<b>\$47,488</b>	<b>\$52,153</b>	<b>\$37,250</b>	<b>127</b>
(R) Altar Guild Income	3,239	2,047	3,000	108
(R) Organ Fund Inc.	1,000	0		
(R) Sunday School	0	420	0	0
(R) Youth Income	0	1,964	0	0
(Wo)Men@grace income	25	0		
Income From Programs	5,000	6,375	5,000	100
Parish Hall Income	8,462	4,200	8,700	97
<b>Program Income</b>	<b>\$17,726</b>	<b>\$15,006</b>	<b>\$16,700</b>	<b>100</b>
Memorials - Unrestricted	25,050	41,608	0	0
Other Income	24,101	8,891	34,500	70
Transfers in from Vicarage and Rectory	9,750	0	8,650	113
<b>Other Income</b>	<b>\$58,901</b>	<b>\$50,499</b>	<b>\$43,150</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>5. OTHER OPERATING INCOME</b>	<b>\$209,117</b>	<b>\$192,659</b>	<b>\$187,100</b>	<b>111</b>
Invest. - Distributions	28,490	27,621	29,000	98
Savings account interest at credit union	161	0		
<b>4. MONEY FROM INVESTMENTS</b>	<b>\$28,651</b>	<b>\$27,621</b>	<b>\$29,000</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>TOTAL OPERATING INCOME</b>	<b>\$403,355</b>	<b>\$372,819</b>	<b>\$376,100</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$403,355</b>	<b>\$372,819</b>	<b>\$376,100</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Diocesan Assessment	41,555	41,364	41,555	100
<b>12. ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>\$41,555</b>	<b>\$41,364</b>	<b>\$41,555</b>	<b>100</b>
Cleaning Expense	5,796	7,881	6,600	88
Electricity	6,251	5,729	5,500	114
Fuel Oil	13,061	14,958	10,200	128
Grounds Expense	6,375	5,902	4,500	142
Housekeeping Supplies	480	234	600	80
Repairs & Maint. - Ordinary	14,050	2,741	4,500	312
Sanitation	1,690	2,025	1,700	99
Security Service	1,903	1,812	1,725	110
Snow Removal	2,600	3,920	5,000	52
Tree Care	0	1,400	1,000	0
Water/Sewer	1,501	1,604	1,500	100
<b>Property Total</b>	<b>\$53,710</b>	<b>\$48,209</b>	<b>\$42,825</b>	<b>125</b>
Employee Benefits - Clergy	16,712	16,731		

Grace Episcopal Church - Millbrook NY  
Treasurer's Report as of December 2025 for Unrestricted General Fund

Saturday, January 3, 2026

Page 2 of 3

Account Name	YTD Balance	Previous YTD	Annual Budget	% of Annual Budget
Pension - Clergy	18,021	18,021		
Rector - Professional Expenses	2,128	1,743		
Salary -Rector	114,052	107,780		
Rector	<b>\$150,915</b>	<b>\$144,276</b>	<b>150,697</b>	<b>100</b>
Payroll Taxes - Music	2,677	1,573		
Salary - Music Director	33,818	21,747		
Music Director	<b>\$36,495</b>	<b>\$23,320</b>	<b>37,725</b>	<b>97</b>
Payroll Tax - Secretary	2,274	1,934		
Retirement secretary	886	2,127		
Salary - Secretary	29,250	25,282		
Secretary	<b>\$32,412</b>	<b>\$29,343</b>	<b>30,187</b>	<b>107</b>
Payroll Tax - Books	855	870		
Salary - Bookkeeper	11,666	11,381		
Bookkeeper	<b>\$12,521</b>	<b>\$12,252</b>	<b>12,681</b>	<b>99</b>
Communications	1,645	0		
Program Development	<b>\$1,645</b>	<b>\$0</b>		
Personnel Total	<b>\$233,989</b>	<b>\$209,192</b>	<b>\$231,290</b>	<b>100</b>
(R) Altar Guild	1,794	4,472	3,000	60
(R) Music Expenses	295	3,100		
Altar - Other Supplies	60	419	1,000	6
Guest Music	0	0	1,000	0
Music Expenses	6,591	7,206	6,000	110
Organ Tuning & Maint	3,570	1,277	2,400	149
Special Services / Spanish, etc.	1,748	1,943	800	219
Supply Clergy	1,207	1,000	1,800	67
Technical Support	3,481	0	6,500	54
Worship/Music	<b>\$18,750</b>	<b>\$19,419</b>	<b>\$22,500</b>	<b>82</b>
Advertising	295	510	550	54
Grace Notes	0	0	250	0
Hospitality/Fellowship	352	316	500	71
Stewardship	189	205	200	95
Parish Life	<b>\$836</b>	<b>\$1,032</b>	<b>\$1,500</b>	<b>56</b>
Nursery Care	0	0	500	0
Sunday School	630	396	300	210
Children/Family	<b>\$630</b>	<b>\$396</b>	<b>\$800</b>	<b>79</b>
(R) Youth Group / Connect	97	1,182	500	20
Confirmation Class	0	19	250	0
Youth Group	<b>\$97</b>	<b>\$1,202</b>	<b>\$750</b>	<b>13</b>
Adult Programs	678	15	500	136
Convention/Retreats/Leadership	448	1,503	1,200	37
Food, Faith, Farms Exp.	150	0		
Adult Programs	<b>\$1,276</b>	<b>\$1,518</b>	<b>\$1,700</b>	<b>66</b>
Program Total	<b>\$21,591</b>	<b>\$23,569</b>	<b>\$27,250</b>	<b>78</b>
Bulletins & Printing & newsletter	603	224	375	161
Computer and website Expense	3,815	3,032	3,500	109
Elevator	825	1,100	1,150	72
Equipment Leases	2,525	2,624	3,100	81
General Insurance	20,248	17,708	18,000	112
Kindred, bank, Paypal fees	415	921	1,000	42

Grace Episcopal Church - Millbrook NY  
Treasurer's Report as of December 2025 for Unrestricted General Fund

Saturday, January 3, 2026

Page 3 of 3

Account Name	YTD Balance	Previous YTD	Annual Budget	% of Annual Budget
Miscellaneous	0	0	0	0
Periodicals/Subscriptions	308	232	350	88
Postage & Delivery	1,205	829	1,000	121
Supplies - Paper, Misc.	2,156	1,643	2,000	108
Telephone & Internet	2,551	2,832	2,500	102
Worker's Comp/Disability/Unemp/Payroll processing	3,981	1,146	1,500	265
Administration Total	\$38,637	\$32,296	\$34,475	112
Fundraising/Rummage Sale	100	0		
Fundraising Total	\$100	\$0		
<b>14. OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$348,028</b>	<b>\$313,267</b>	<b>\$335,840</b>	<b>103</b>
Outreach Program Support	0	12	0	0
<b>13. OUTREACH</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$12</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>0</b>
Mortgage Payments and Vicarage Expenses	0	1,861	0	0
Vicarage Expenses	\$0	\$1,861	\$0	0
<b>15. MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$1,861</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>0</b>
Total Expenses	<u>\$389,583</u>	<u>\$356,505</u>	<u>\$377,395</u>	<u>103</u>
Difference	<u>\$13,771</u>	<u>\$16,313</u>	<u>(\$1,295)</u>	

If the accounts in the subtotals have changed or if ledger and subsidiary account attributes have changed, Previous YTD totals may not represent a valid comparison.

When showing the Previous YTD balance and excluding zero balance accounts, subtotals may not be accurate.

Account #	Account Name	Fund	Period Activity	YTD Balance
<i>Assets</i>				
101.000	Grace Church Cash-Checking		61,458.28	80,434.08
<i>111.100 Restricted Accounts</i>				
111.101	Cash - Altar Guild		294.37	1,753.83
111.102	Cash - The Abby Fund		0.00	2,516.88
111.103	Cash - Food Table		0.00	3,056.30
111.104	Cash - Grace Year (Old)		0.00	173.81
111.108	Cash - Lunch Box		182.00	(385.85)
111.109	Cash - Memorials		0.00	458.10
111.110	Cash - Memorial Garden		0.00	1,381.41
111.111	Cash - Men@Grace		0.00	1,367.38
111.113	Cash - Pre-School		(3,541.29)	31,114.40
111.116	Cash - Vicarage		(1,875.56)	6,407.02
111.117	Cash - Window/Stained Glass		(397.87)	1,200.00
111.118	Cash - Youth		0.00	658.67
111.124	Cash - Franklin Ave Window		0.00	473.87
111.127	Climate Change Conference		0.00	100.00
111.128	Alison Quin Youth Account		0.00	1,435.00
111.129	Cash - Rectory (starting July 2024)		1,379.48	23,605.51
111.154	Cash - GIO - ECFNY		0.00	285.00
111.155	Cash - GIO - ECFNY - North Star		0.00	321.33
111.161	Cash - Hidden Angels Grief Support		0.00	1,000.00
111.164	Cash - Green Energy		0.00	1,400.00
111.165	Cash - Music and Arts		(295.00)	0.00
111.166	Building/Grounds Planning & Projects		0.00	3,200.00
111.167	Cash - New Robes For Choir		0.00	2,000.00
111.205	Cash - Organ		(1,000.00)	0.00
111.216	Cash - Fund Raising Consultant		(5,000.00)	0.00
	<i>Total Restricted Accounts</i>		<i>(\$10,253.87)</i>	<i>\$83,522.66</i>
112.000	Cash - Capital Improvement		0.00	1,678.61
113.000	Rector's Discretionary Fund		(100.00)	1,652.81
114.000	NY Episcopal Federal Credit Union - Savings		0.02	50.26
114.002	NY Episcopal Federal Credit Union - Checking		0.00	0.14
114.500	NY Episcopal Federal Credit Union - C/D		0.00	25,160.81

Investment Fund Balances		
PEMS	\$ 55,899.96	11/30/2025
DFMS	\$ 589,207.32	09/30/2025
Meeker (Organ)	\$ 14,554.18	11/30/2025
DFMS (Preschool)	\$ 8,230.64	09/30/2025

Historical DFMS Fund by year

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Beginning	\$ 487,706	\$ 567,496	\$ 636,996	\$ 659,336	\$ 465,387	\$ 473,912	\$ 533,214
Dividends	\$ 25,136	\$ 24,968	\$ 24,604	\$ 25,985	\$ 25,483	\$ 25,276	\$ 26,166
Addition / (Withdrawal)	\$ -	\$ (13,000)	\$ (10,000)	\$ (40,000)	\$ (20,000)	\$ 20,000	\$ -
End of year	\$ 567,496	\$ 636,996	\$ 659,336	\$ 465,387	\$ 473,912	\$ 533,214	\$ 589,207

(9/30/2025)

## 2025 Stewardship and 2026 Budget Report

### Income

2025 was a banner year for Grace Church Millbrook in terms of income, totaling (as of 12/30/2025) over \$401,000, roughly \$25,000 (6.6%) above the budget projection of \$376,100. The combined pater, pledge and regular support total hit the target (though pledge was below projection) as did investment distribution. Grant income was reduced, as the Tribute Garden grant was reduced, but fundraising, program and rental income all exceeded budget projections. This shows the success of the Vestry approved strategic plan to diversify income with rental of parish hall space for a therapy practice, rental of the Vicarage, and occupancy offset of the Rectory (also used for temporary clergy stays). But the real surprise was a generous end of year series of donations from individuals and family foundations, both as memorials and straightforward donations, that exceeded \$50,000, well above budget expectations \$34,500. Thank you to all who gave so generously.

### Expenses

2025 expenses (\$389,627) also exceeded budget expectations (\$377,395), by about \$12,000 (3%). Some additional expenses in building and grounds maintenance were offset by drawing from reserve vicarage and rectory funds. Insurance and administrative expenses were also above budget predictions, as was fuel oil—some of which was due to a breakdown in parts of the HVAC system of the church, which will be replaced in 2026.

**Bottom line for 2025: Income exceeded expenses by \$13,771. Nevertheless, we need to increase pledge support for continued long term growth.**

## 2026 Budget

### Income

The 2026 budget approved at the December Vestry meeting reduces pledge total, based on a three year decline in the number and total of pledging individuals or families. This has been partially offset by an increase in “regular support”—donations given by members by check or online payments, but who haven’t signed or sent in an email pledging a certain annual amount. If this describes you, please consider submitting an annual pledge—any time of the year though we have a pledge drive every year in November. This helps the Vestry plan the budget with more confidence about income. Remember, a pledge is not a contract; it is simply a prayerful commitment to support the church. It can be changed, more or less, as circumstances change.

Other sources of expected income include fund-raising efforts, up slightly reflecting recent successful reintroduction of the golf/dinner benefit, and a strong rummage sale and Christmas bazaar. Income from grants is slightly down, but we have included a draw from rectory and vicarage reserves specifically targeting expected property needs. The projection of other income is based on historical averages. Total income is conservatively estimated at \$373,900, slightly less than last year's budget (and considerably less than 2025 actual).

### **Expenses**

The big news for 2026 is the sharp reduction in diocesan assessment, from \$41,555 to \$16,729. This reflects canonical changes passed at the recent diocesan convention. Other expense lines are set by looking at historical costs and adjusting for expected increases, especially in insurance and administrative costs. Compensation for clergy and staff follows diocesan convention mandates for a minimum salary COLA increase of 3.2%. Medical plan costs for rector are up 4.4%. Nevertheless, thanks to diocesan assessment reduction, 2026 budget expenses (\$373,913) are projected to be below the 2025 budget (\$377,874).

Replacement of needed parts of the church HVAC system will cost somewhere around \$35,000. Funds to do this work will be partially supplied through a diocesan property support grant of \$15,000 and a mid-Hudson grant of \$2000 we have already received. The Vestry has also approved placing \$10,000 of the 2025 surplus in a capital improvements restricted account. Remaining funds will be drawn from reserve accounts as needed.

**Bottom line: a balanced budget conservatively projecting expected income and allowing for increase in personnel salaries and realistically assessing other expenses. Property will be continued to be maintained even as additional capital improvements needs are evaluated in anticipation of a future capital campaign.**

Account Name	2025 Budget	2025 Actual	2026 Budget	Note
<b>Income</b>				
Plate	10,000	11,067	10,000	
Pledge	140,000	132,072	135,000	reduced but still aspirational
Regular Support Donations	10,000	22,446	13,000	raised to reflect 3 year average
<b>PLEDGE, PLATE, SUPPORT</b>	<b>160,000</b>	<b>\$165,586</b>	<b>158,000</b>	
Dyson Grant	75,000	75,000	75,000	
Tribute Garden Donation	15,000	10,000	5,000	reflecting reduced grant
<b>Grant Income</b>	<b>90,000</b>	<b>\$85,000</b>	<b>80,000</b>	
Fundraising - Golf	25,000	32,281	30,000	
Fundraising - Holiday Sale Inc.	4,000	3,761	4,000	
Fundraising - Rummage Sale	7,500	11,287	10,000	
Fundraising Other	0	159	0	
<b>Fundraising Income</b>	<b>36,500</b>	<b>\$47,488</b>	<b>44,000</b>	reflecting recent results
(R) Alvar Guild Income	3,000	3,239	3,000	
(R) Music and Arts income		0	1,500	expected from MMS
(R) Organ Fund Inc.		1,000	500	draw from organ fund
Income From Programs	5,000	5,000	5,000	preschool contribution
Parish Hall Income	8,700	8,462	8,700	rental of office space for HITRD
<b>Program Income</b>	<b>16,700</b>	<b>\$17,726</b>	<b>18,700</b>	
Memorials - Unrestricted	0	25,050	0	
Other Income	34,500	24,121	30,000	historical estimate, including memorials
Transfers in from Vicarage and Rectory	8,650	9,750	13,700	\$8,700 from vicarage rental and \$5,000 from rectory for property
<b>Other Income</b>	<b>43,150</b>	<b>\$58,921</b>	<b>43,700</b>	
<b>2. OTHER OPERATING INCOME</b>	<b>186,350</b>	<b>\$209,137</b>	<b>186,400</b>	
Invest. - Distributions	29,000	28,490	30,000	
Savings account interest at credit union	0	161	200	credit union
<b>3. MONEY FROM INVESTMENTS</b>	<b>29,000</b>	<b>\$28,651</b>	<b>30,200</b>	
<b>TOTAL OPERATING INCOME</b>	<b>375,350</b>	<b>\$403,375</b>	<b>374,600</b>	

<i>Expenses</i>	EDNY Common Mission Share	41,555	\$41,555	16,729	reduced due to canon change
Cleaning Expense	6,600	5,796	6,600		
Electricity	5,500	6,251	6,500		assuming rate increase
Fuel Oil	10,200	13,061	12,000		check 2025 actual; may be slightly higher (14,958)
Grounds Expense	4,500	6,373	6,000		increase due to historical trend
Housekeeping Supplies	600	480	500		
Repairs & Maint. - Ordinary	4,500	14,050	5,000		last year included unusual expenses offset by rectory contribution
Sanitation	1,700	1,690	1,700		
Security Service	1,725	1,903	1,725		
Snow Removal	5,000	2,600	3,000		
Tree Care	1,000	0	0		
Water/Sewer	1,500	1,501	1,600		
<b>Property Total</b>	<b>42,825</b>	<b>\$53,710</b>	<b>44,625</b>		
Rector	150,697	\$150,915	164,961		includes salary, benefits, rector admin
Music Director	37,725	\$36,495	38,932		3.2% increase per diocesan resolution
Secretary	30,187	\$32,412	31,153		3.2% increase per diocesan resolution
Bookkeeper	12,681	\$12,521	13,087		3.2% increase per diocesan resolution
Program Development		\$1,645			no budgeted personnel
<b>Personnel Total</b>	<b>231,290</b>	<b>\$233,989</b>	<b>248,133</b>		
(R) Altar Guild	3,000	1,794	3,000		
(R) Music Expenses		295			
Altar - Other Supplies	1,000	60	1,000		
Guest Music	1,000	0	1,000		
Music Expenses	6,000	6,591	6,500		slight increase
Organ Tuning & Maint	2,400	3,570	2,600		
Special Services / Spanish, etc.	800	1,748	1,750		increase to reflect 2025 actual
Supply Clergy	1,800	1,207	1,800		
Technical Support	6,500	3,481	4,000		
<b>Worship/Music</b>	<b>22,500</b>	<b>\$18,750</b>	<b>21,650</b>		
Advertising	550	295	550		
Grace Notes	250	0	0		
Hospitality/Fellowship	500	352	500		
Stewardship	200	189	200		

<b>Parish Life</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>\$836</b>	<b>1,250</b>	
Nursery Care	500	0	0	
Sunday School	300	630	500	
<b>Children/Family</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>\$630</b>	<b>500</b>	
(R) Youth Group / Connect	500	97	0	
Confirmation Class	250	0	150	
<b>Youth Programs</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>\$97</b>	<b>150</b>	
Adult Programs	500	678	750	
Convention/Retreats/Leadership	1,200	448	1,200	
Food, Faith, Farms Exp.		150		
<b>Adult Programs</b>	<b>1,700</b>	<b>\$1,276</b>	<b>1,950</b>	
<b>Program Total</b>	<b>27,250</b>	<b>\$21,591</b>	<b>25,500</b>	slight reduction; may adjust
Bulletins & Printing & newsletter	375	603	500	increase in printing
Computer and website Expense	3,500	3,815	3,500	
Elevator	1,150	825	1,150	
Equipment Leases	3,100	2,525	3,100	
General Insurance	18,000	20,248	22,000	projected increase
Kindred, bank, Paypal fees	1,000	415	500	
Miscellaneous	0	0	0	
Periodicals/Subscriptions	350	308	250	
Postage & Delivery	1,000	1,205	1,000	
Professional Fees and Dues		0	0	
Supplies - Paper, Misc.	2,000	2,156	2,000	
Telephone & Internet	2,500	2,551	2,500	
Worker's Comp/Disability/Unemp/Payroll processing	1,500	3,981	4,200	reflecting increase
<b>Administration Total</b>	<b>34,475</b>	<b>\$38,637</b>	<b>40,700</b>	
Fundraising/Rummage Sale Expenses		100	100	
<b>Fundraising Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$100</b>	<b>100</b>	
<b>2. OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>335,840</b>	<b>\$348,028</b>	<b>359,058</b>	
<b>TOTAL BUDGETTED EXPENSES</b>	<b>377,395</b>	<b>\$389,583</b>	<b>375,787</b>	Outreach and Major Improvement expenses not included
<b>Difference</b>	<b>-2,045</b>	<b>13,792</b>	<b>-1,187</b>	\$10,000 of surplus to be placed in capital improvement fund

## Property Report

A number of repairs and improvements were made to the buildings and grounds of Grace Church in 2025.

Repair and painting work on the Vicarage was completed and a family moved in.

The north and west faces of the church tower were freshly painted, completing the work begun with the relocation of the Memorial Garden plaque and the restoration and repositioning of the Resurrection window in 2024.

The overlarge pear tree in the west church courtyard was removed and the area graded and seeded with grass. A Norwegian maple tree that overhung the Rectory was also removed. The Douglas fir trees along the parking lot were pruned, as well as the crab apple by the Memorial Garden. This work is part of the landscape design done by member and landscape architect Ryan Manning. Molly Hurley helped shepherd the work as part of the property committee.

Matt Latvis took on the work of replacing the front sign, which had originally been given in memory of his parents. He did a beautiful job not only with the sign but hand crafted the supporting posts and did the stonework.

New stained glass windows were commissioned and installed along the west wall of the church, honoring Charles R. Johnson, Eleanor Roosevelt and St Julian of Norwich. A dedication service was held on October 25, 2025. Bishops Alan Shin and Doug Fisher participated along with members of the Johnson family, representatives of veteran groups, and the rector, Fr Matt Calkins. County Executive Sue Serino issued a proclamation recognizing the event.

On the challenging side, the thermostatic control and the exterior compressors of the heating and air conditioning system of the sanctuary malfunctioned. Repairs are scheduled for early spring 2026.

Maintenance and improvements continue to be an annual part of the work of the Vestry. Plans for the degraded parking lot and improvements to the HVAC system of the parish hall, as well other issues will be part of the planned work in 2026 and 2027.

The Property Committee

## Fundraising Report

### Grace Church 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf & Dinner Benefit

This year's annual Grace golf tournament and dinner auction, held yet again at the Millbrook Golf & Tennis Club, was a huge success, garnering \$32,281, largely due to the hard work of co-chairs ML Ball and James Prudden. The bar was set extraordinarily high as the previous year's take, a bit over \$35,000, was a record, coming as it did after a few Covid years of inactivity. That we came very close to that record this year was a pleasant surprise.

Success boils down to numbers, so here are a few. There were 2 honorees: the Pillar of Grace, our own Jean Hayes; and the Pillar of the Community, Betsy Shequine, a retired local judge. 54 golfers tortured themselves over 18 holes, and nearly 100 diners enjoyed cocktails and a dinner buffet that was, as is typical for the club, of high quality. There was a good deal of support from area businesses: 5 Gold sponsors, and even 1 double-Gold sponsor (!); 4 Silver sponsors; 3 Lunch sponsors; 6 Hole-in-One sponsors, and 16 Eagle, Birdie, Honoree, Golf Ball and Outreach sponsors. We note with thanksgiving that several of the corporate sponsors were related, once again, to the Dyson family. Their generosity is noteworthy.

In addition to these sponsors there were 56 (!) items/experiences donated to the silent auction. We won't enumerate them all here but suffice it to say that all of them elicited a robust bidding response.

To all the sponsors and those who donated to the silent auction we say, yet again, "Thank you for your generosity!"

There were numerous volunteers who were invaluable to the success of the event, particularly on the day of. We would like to highlight a few: Thea Scotti donated and served both the breakfast and lunch for golfers during the tournament; Marilyn Schiller oversaw the myriad of office-based details that are needed to pull off an event like this; Fr. Matt worked the phones to generate interest among area golfers; and finally our merry band of volunteers, who helped set-up, clean up, check in golfers and diners, check out and handle payments, and procure silent auction donations: Jim Ball, Pam Freeman, Linda Kolts, Lisa and John Lacey, Kirsten Muth, Susan Nestel, Heather Ostman, Susan Quigley, Cathy Shanks, Marian Thompson, Lorie and Joseph Whiteley, and Chris Wilson. We are no doubt forgetting a few, for which we apologize.

We also thank Grace Church members who gave both time and money to make our annual fundraiser a success.

Now, a quick word about the future. For the 2026 edition, we are looking for someone to replace ML as co-chair, as she will not be able to spend the required hours on the fundraiser this year. In addition, James would like to identify a replacement for him as well, not for this year but for next (2027). If we identify these two people early, they can see how it's done this year so they are better informed next year when they take the reins.

Please contact ML [mlball23@hotmail.com](mailto:mlball23@hotmail.com) or James [james.prudden@gmail.com](mailto:james.prudden@gmail.com) if you have any questions! And thanks again, all, for the successful fundraiser.

## **St. Nicholas Bazaar 2025 Report**

### **Overview**

The 2025 St. Nicholas Fair was a tremendous success. We welcomed a steady flow of visitors, enjoyed strong sales, and received enthusiastic compliments from vendors and guests alike. The event showcased the energy, generosity, and spirit of our church community.

### **Cookie Sale and Food Items**

Approximately **120 pounds of cookies** were packed and sold, and not a crumb remained by the end of the fair. In addition to the beautiful assortment of cookies, we offered a wide variety of handmade Christmas food treats, knitted hats and scarves, homemade dog treats, and numerous handcrafted ornaments. A large selection of gently used Christmas décor also filled the room, much of which went home with very happy customers.

### **Vendors**

More than **30 vendors** participated, filling both floors of the parish house as well as the stage with high-quality, handmade crafts. We received many positive comments from vendors; several shared that this is their favorite bazaar to attend.

### **Volunteers and Support**

We extend sincere thanks to everyone who contributed, including those who:

- baked, packed, and delivered cookies
- made candy and treats
- helped decorate and set up the parish house, and provided beautiful holiday music
- greeted and guided visitors
- managed money and sales

- moved tables, swept, and cleaned up afterward

Your efforts created a warm, welcoming, and festive environment.

### **Highlights of the Day**

- strong fellowship and community spirit
- laughter and friendship
- welcoming returning and new visitors
- enthusiastic vendor participation

### **Financial Results**

The bazaar grossed **\$4,300** in support of **Grace Church's programs and missions.**

### **Conclusion**

The St. Nicholas Fair 2025 was a joyful success marked by community effort, generosity, and celebration. We thank everyone who contributed in any way to making this year's event truly special.

**SUBMITTED BY COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS: Lynda Boissey and Pamela Freeman**

### **Whale of a Sale Rummage Sale – April 4,5,6**

Once again, the rummage sale brought together the most amazing combination of gently used items to sell. We had everything from clothes, furniture, children's toys, books, tools, kitchen items, and even a snow blower. This year we raised \$11,287. We would not be able to run this event without the help of all who worked on the sale including set up, take down and marketing. We fully appreciate the donations, volunteers, and shoppers!

Submitted by: Cathy Shanks

## Music Program Report

In my second year of leading the Music Program at Grace as Director of Music, we've been able to deepen and refine our use of music in the liturgy. The members of Grace's choir grew in number, blend and skill: Rachel Bazaz, Lynda Boisey, Dawn Galente, Thea Scotti, and Marion Thompson, with the new addition of Susan Nestel and Mary Jane Zukowski. Baritone, Jesse Eshkol, joined the choir for much of Epiphany, Lent and Easter in 2025, until he took a job as paid section leader at another Episcopal church in the area. So far we have not been able to attract men to sing regularly with the choir, but we'll continue to be ready to welcome any that might have interest. The current members of the choir have all stepped up to the challenge of personally working on our music for Grace: each committing time at home to learn weekly repertoire, prepare musical details and vocal techniques, in view of the limited time we can rehearse together in person each week. The cultural change post-pandemic in the ability or desire to devote time each week to a group effort such as a church choir is felt in this ministry.

As for liturgical singing at Grace, I still find it worthy and important to continue our use of available resources to chant the weekly psalm – the songbook of the church – using the modified Anglican chant found in St. Marten's Psalter, and continuing the ancient call and response Alleluia and verse, which helps focus our hearts/minds to hear the Gospel reading each Sunday. This year I have limited the Service Music we use, (major propers: Gloria, Sanctus and Fraction Anthem) mostly to the settings from our Hymnal, to allow deeper and prayerful connection to these group responses in the service.

We had a special celebration of St. Bridget for her saint day in February 2025, including ancient Irish music and chant, learning lore surrounding the saint and making Brigid's crosses together.

We rehearsed and offered a beautiful Lenten Choral Evensong on Sunday March 30<sup>th</sup> – a beautiful service of music and prayer from the Anglican tradition, enjoyed by many in our community. Singing friends from the community added to the full choral sound of sung prayer.

For our jubilant Easter service, trumpeter Gary Banks joined us, as well as a group of singers from the community to thrillingly embody the joy of resurrection in sound.

We are very grateful for the musical members of our community who stepped up to offer their solo voices and keyboard skills toward music during the summer months, when the choir is taking a break.

Following the great outpouring of support we received for the service in 2024, we brought in seven additional singers to help fill the choral forces for Grace's Christmas Service of Lessons and Carols on Advent IV, December 21<sup>st</sup> of 2025. Though the quality and

expressiveness of the performances of the sacred pieces involved was quite high, unfortunately this event was disappointingly not well-attended this year.

The fine cellist Christine Gummere joined us once again on Christmas morning to play duets with me on organ and harp.

James Ruff

## **Bible Study and Wednesday Eucharist Service Report**

Grace Church serves our parishioners and members of our community by hosting a Bible study and a worship service every Wednesday morning. The group consists of regular participants and walk ins are welcome. The attendees are dynamic, knowledgeable and enthusiastic. The Bible study's denominational diversity gives an interesting perspective to the lively discussion. We work our way through reading the Bible and Pastor Matt leads the discussion.

Immediately following the Bible study is a Prayers and Saints Eucharist service. At this worship service, persons in need of prayer or those whom wish to request special prayers for healing come and participate. Prior to the service Pastor begins with a lesson on an exceptional individual taken from the lesser feasts and fasts. The the service begins with Prayers of healing requests and the Eucharist. The worship is spiritually beneficial and amazing experience. Lots is learned and love is shared.

These opportunities are a wonderful way to celebrate our mission to love and serve the world in the name of Christ welcoming the community and encouraging those in need.

Submitted January 2026  
Lori Morritt

## ALTAR GUILD

The Altar Guild is responsible for ordering the candles, wine, wafers and for dressing the Altar for services. The Altar Guild also ensures that all necessary details are in place for weddings and funerals.

The colors on the Altar change according to the church calendar that indicates when each season begins: Advent blue, Christmas white, Lent purple, Easter white and Red for the first Sunday in Pentecost. Green is for the rest of the season of Pentecost. The Guild makes these changes.

Decorating the church for Advent, Christmas and Easter is also done by the Altar Guild with help from the Laceys and other members of the church congregation. Polishing the brass vases and candles is also done by the Altar Guild. The flowers used by the church are ordered from Deidre at Millbrook Florist. Donations for flowers help support the budget, also with support from the general fund. Restricted donations to the Altar Guild for flowers etc. in the amount of \$3,239.00 helped to offset Altar expenses of \$1,794.00.

The Guild is in need of new members, who can help before and after each service and at weddings and funerals.

Members are Jean Hayes, retired Director, Lynda Boisse, Marli Higa, Karen Whitton, Susan Nestel, Jimmy Pearson, and Lorie Whitely. Lynda takes care of hand and machine repairs to any of the linens, and Susan handles much of the flower responsibilities.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Quigley, Director

## Worship Volunteers & Formation Report

The word "liturgy" in its original Greek (*leitourgia*), means the work of the people or work done on behalf of the people. So Christian worship, based in liturgy, is properly done by the congregation — the people who come together for worship. In addition to the clergy, there are also those members of the congregation that are set apart to do the work of worship on behalf of the people, with special roles. Those who prepare the altar and those who distribute communion; those who proclaim the lessons from Scripture and gather the prayers of the people; and those who provide welcome, hospitality, and belonging. Serving during worship in these and other ways is vital to the service and life of the Church.

**SUNDAY WORSHIP** This year at Grace, **we've welcomed a number of new folks** to our rota of liturgical servers, especially at the 10am service. We've had a steady supply of volunteers at the 8am service who have ensured that there is always a reader, usher, and coffee hour host at that service. At the 10am service, the new additions to the rota fall mostly into the "reader" category. Still, a couple of parishioners have volunteered to become ushers and a couple of new chalice bearers were added after the Diocesan sponsored Eucharistic Minister training held here in June. **Some challenges** for "staffing" Sunday worship remain: at the 8am service, there is a need for more chalice bearers week to week; and at the 10am service, there is a consistent gap at coffee hour and that slot remains the most frequently empty one on the volunteer rota. **Special thanks** should be extended to **John and Lisa Lacey** who continue to regularly host coffee hour and often volunteer to bring refreshments when there is no host signed up for a given Sunday.

**SPECIAL SERVICES** Outside of Sunday services, we've been blessed with a ready and willing base of volunteers who help at our special services and celebrations as readers, ushers, and chalice bearers. Such services include **choral evensong** in March, a **dedication of our new windows** in October, **Lessons and Carols** in December, and our afternoon and evening worship in Lent, Holy Week, and Christmas. In September, we also published a **ministry guide** and **recognized our ministries** and volunteers during Sunday worship.

**FORMATION** This year saw a return to the **Adult Forum between services** in Epiphany, Lent, and Advent. In **Epiphany**, we heard from fellow parishioners and community members about Evelyn Boyd Granville, Charles Johnson, Eleanor Roosevelt and Pauli Murray. In **Lent**, we explored and reflected upon some traditional spiritual practices together. New this year for adult formation, we held a discussion group that ran for the four weeks of **Advent**. The book of choice was *Holy is His Name*, by Elis Lui, a postulant for the priesthood in the Diocese of New York.

**A PERSONAL NOTE** As I reflect on the last few years, I feel an immense gratitude for the time that I've spent at Grace. I came here as a member of the fifth and final Grace Year cohort and was immediately adopted into the life of our parish. After Grace Year ended, I continued to live here on campus for a few months and entered the discernment process with Father Matt. Through meeting with my discernment

committee, I found a clarified call to pursue the priesthood. I am especially grateful for the members of that committee that prayed, listened, and discerned with me: Lisa Lacey, the chair, Dennis Freeman, Heather Ostman, Marli Higa, and Tim Sharpe. In June, I will continue that process and leave to attend seminary at the School of Theology at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee. I am looking forward to the three years of personal and vocational formation but will deeply miss this place and the people of Grace. There are too many of you to mention every person here but I remember all of you in my prayers of thanksgiving and I am excited to continue our walk together for my remaining six months in Millbrook. I hope to visit regularly but at the very least, I hope that you will remember me in your prayers as I will remember Grace during my time in seminary. Exercising ministry among and alongside you has been an incredible journey and I am excited to see where the Holy Spirit calls us to next.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben York

## Grace Archives and Theology on Tap

The **Grace Church Archives** are undergoing some reorganization, following the pattern set by Eleanor Sutherland and Edna Tyldsley from 1992-1998. This involves integrating the large volume of materials from the past 30 years into the filing sequence. These materials, currently in binders, piles, and drawers, include vestry minutes, Grace Notes, sermons, bulletins, miscellany, and documents from Grace Latino Outreach / Northeast Dutchess Immigrant Services, Church Housing Alliance, EPIC, and Grace Year. Once organized we expect to display interesting items in the Parish Hall, and to produce brief histories of the features of Grace Church, such as the stained glass, and our activities over the past quarter-century.

==

Over the past couple of months, we have extended an open invitation to the community by posters and word of mouth to join us for **Theology on Tap**, to talk about the Big Questions and little, each week at Julien's Pizza and Bar, each Thursday, from 8 p.m. until closing. Someone brings a question — such as, "What does it mean to be embodied?" or "Is it a sin to spill your drink?" — and a rousing discussion follows. So far it's been a small group, but Julien's is somewhat quiet at that hour and discussion has expanded out from our booth to involve everyone there: Christians and unbelievers alike.

Respectfully submitted,

Will Cox

## Sunday School Report

The 2025 Sunday School is a dedicated group teaching our Grace youth weekly on Sundays during the 10am service. Our teachers include Connie DiPuppo, Cindy Guardiola, Pam Freeman, Linda Kolts and Marilyn Schiller. The NYC diocese offered a generous discount to purchase a teaching curriculum, Storymakers. This year we taught the curriculum for the weeks of Advent culminating with a Christmas pageant on December 24. With Father Matt's recruitment dedication and Marc Boissey's direction, our youth group presented the pageant to a full house at the 5pm Christmas Eve service. It was delightful and all had smiles! We will continue with the Godly Play curriculum, and add the storymakers curriculum during the weeks of Lent and Easter in 2026.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marilyn Schiller



## **Millbrook Community Preschool at Grace Church**

### **Overview**

Upon reflection, the last year has been one of continued hope and belief in the future the preschool at Grace Church. Now in our 20th year, we opened our doors with overwhelming support from our funding partners, commitment from the excited families of 25 children who enrolled this September. Even with the increasing availability of free universal PreK programs for 4 year olds, we continue to attract a mix of 3-5 year old students, continuing our belief that what we offer at Millbrook Community Preschool is relevant, needed, and truly special.

The formula remains the same. Every weekday morning, you'll find the grounds of Grace Church humming with the chatter and laughter of the delightful young children who attend its preschool program. They are busy doing everything that children their age should do - enjoying the playground, exploring the outdoors, running, playing in the kitchen, painting, creating worlds with blocks, experimenting with sand, clay and water, gathering for circle time to share books, games, songs and stories. Since opening its doors, Millbrook Community Preschool at Grace Church has represented a high-quality and affordable option for families seeking a great first-school experience for their children. Increasingly, the program has come to be seen as a model of best practice in our area, pushing back on the top-down pressures for measurable academic "results" that have crept into many early learning classrooms. Instead, we fully embraced the philosophy that young children learn best through play.

Families come to Millbrook Community Preschool both on the strength of word-of-mouth recommendations from alumni families, and by stumbling upon the school's website, which showcases the program with a combination of professional photography, video content, and testimonials. The support of the church community and funding partners has allowed the program to continue to evolve and blossom. With the combined grant support of both the Dyson Foundation and EGCMN Foundations to \$40,000 annually, we have been able to stretch the reach of our scholarship program this year, opening space for even more deserving children. Currently, 40% of children attending are in receipt of tuition relief. One of the expressed aims of the preschool is to keep tuition affordable for the community, and tuition alone would not allow the scope to impact so many families. The combined support of both the Dyson Foundation and EGCMN Foundation for general program support has been the lifeblood of the school, and we are indebted to them.

The preschool continues to serve as a starting point for families who are struggling with emergent learning needs. Teachers are ever observant, and in regular contact with families. One of the responsibilities of the preschool is to help identify areas where a child is in need of support, and ensure that services are expedited when necessary. We often the first point for guiding these sometimes emotional conversations with parents. Families know they have our respect and confidence, and they reward us with their trust. We are open to hosting evaluations

from special education professionals, and invested in helping parents advocate for their children when necessary. We also provide space on the premises during school time for special support services to be facilitated. These early therapeutic interventions give children a huge advantage when making the transition to kindergarten, and life beyond. Again last year, children received a range of services on the school premises, including occupational therapy, speech and language, and physical therapy.

## **Program Strengths**

Prospective families continue to be drawn in to the aesthetically beautiful physical spaces and play equipment, which consistently make a strong first impression. These include the studio art room, library, cubby and cloakroom, dramatic play and sensory areas, construction playroom, and outdoor playground. All are truly state-of-the-art. These intentionally planned spaces underpin the philosophical approach of the program and align with the latest research on how young children learn best. The school's mission is to provide spaces where exploration is valued, and the environment is the first teacher. The approach allows for freedom of movement for young children, enticing choices, and long periods of intuitive and uninterrupted play alongside gentle and compassionate adults. In this environment, children learn and thrive.

When possible, roughly half of the children's day is still spent outdoors. In what some consider challenging weather, we encourage families to get their children suited up to brace the elements. As the saying goes, there is no such thing as bad weather, just the wrong clothes. You will find the children playing in rain, mud and snow all through the school year, and when the weather turns fine, we spend the whole day outdoors. Even with the building popularity of forest schools, this ethos distinguishes us from many other early learning programs in the area. There is huge interest and value in this approach. Class projects often take place under the shelter of the outdoor classroom as the rain beats down, even the morning circle can happen as the snow falls. This approach has facilitated many thrilling connections between literacy and the natural world. Children arrive dressed for full and active engagement, in whatever clothing the weather demands. They are joined by their teachers in every aspect of play. The program at Grace is unique in that the teachers, like the children, are ready for whatever the day brings. When it snows, we too are in our snowsuits. The children are encouraged to fully immerse in play, to run freely, pick flowers, jump in puddles, dig in wet earth, and gently catch frogs and worms for observation. There are many clothing changes during the course of the day! The physical and psychological benefits of being outdoors are clear in the strength, confidence and emotional resilience we see growth in the children with each passing week. The appeal of this commitment to being outdoors every day, in all weather, has become one of the cornerstones of our program, and holds massive appeal for both enrolled and prospective families.

Another strength of the program lies in its openness to family connection and engagement. We strive to foster a strong community spirit by hosting events that welcome the

whole family, and an openness to the enrichment that families, our partners in learning, can bring. We have marked this year with many such occasions. With parents setting filling paddling pools and water balloons and grilling up bbq treats at the Summer Splash Party, and preparing strawberry shortcake and lemonade for our always joyful End of Year Celebration. This fall, families gathered upstairs in the parish hall to host an indoor Halloween Trick or Treat event, and this December, parents planned and hosted a morning of Christmas ornament making, hot cocoa and cookies for the whole school community. This multigenerational event culminated in carol singing and some impromptu dancing around the piano upstairs in the Parish house. We had a guest pianist, a parent play Santa, and a grandfather serenade the guests on guitar. Such events represent the spirit of community that the preschool cherishes.

A huge strength of our program continues to lie in the talented, compassionate and endlessly energetic teaching staff, of which Father Matt is a valued member. The weekly Chapel Program continues to be a unique and much loved facet of the program, with Wednesdays booking out early in the year by families who wish for their children to experience the joy, comfort and fun. Father Matt's weekly sessions take as their starting point a simple Bible story and song, and a conversation that frequently ends in giggles all around. The lessons of love, kindness and respect that he reinforces each week are another dimension of our program which demonstrate our strong, unique brand of teaching. A highlight this year was the Blessing of the Animals ceremony, with all kids bringing along a stuffy and some parents bringing pets, and invitation to participate in the Grace Christmas Pageant.

We have some staff changes this year, with our beloved Miss Ruth moving to full time teaching, Miss Kay retiring, and Miss Carolyn scaling back her hours after 20 years of service to Grace. These long serving teachers had been the backbone of the school, and we are so grateful for their impact. However, we are excited with recent additions to our teaching team, each with a wealth of experience and talent. Macia Asplund has two children that are Grace alumni, has worked extensively with young people through her capacity as a clinical social worker at the Astor program. Kara Cannistra is an art therapist with extensive work in preschool and in serving children with disabilities. Ana Valle is a trained preschool educator from Mexico, and comes to us after serving at the Stanford Nurse School for 10 years. These teachers have brought a renewed sense of energy, purpose and creativity to the program at Grace, and parents see and value their work.

We currently staff to 4 teachers each day, with up to 16 children per session. This generous staffing allowance is necessary to support our educational ethos, to provide children the opportunity to move freely between play spaces and activities at their own pace, rather than corralling them into groups and asking them to complete the same tasks at the same time. Also, our strong teacher numbers allow us to facilitate outdoor play in all weather conditions, which requires many hands to assist with the daily task of assisting young children in and out of rain and snow gear. Additionally, our staffing ratios ensure the safety of both children and teachers across our many play spaces, outdoors, throughout the various rooms in the preschool, and often upstairs in the parish house for one of the children's favorite activities, bike riding. Parents obviously love the student:teacher ratios. We are fortunate to have on our sub list teachers that

have long been connected with our school. The benefit of having a generous number of teachers on hand has resulted in a rich experience for the children, as well as a creative and ever evolving curriculum. We are never short of ideas! The positive culture of support and respect among the teaching staff is an aspect of our program that we acknowledge and treasure.

### **Reflection - Looking Forward**

The continued interest and support for our program demonstrates the need for choice in the early learning landscape. In spite of the availability of free, full time early education for the youngest learners, more and more families are seeking us out for the inherent value in what our program represents. For some, it is the outdoor learning, play based program which maximizes connection to nature and lots of active learning. For others, it is the gentle start in an emotional environment where the stakes and stresses on young children are kept intentionally low; with the importance of the child always trumping the importance of the activity. For others, it is the openness to family involvement, and the opportunities for an extended shared experience of childhood that are afforded to parents and grandparents that wish to keep their children entwined in their life for a little longer. It is the beautiful spaces, the quality of the play equipment, the reputation of the experienced and compassionate staff. It is the non intrusive nature of the scholarship program, and the ease of support to those who need it. Within the non denominational approach, it is the comfort of the weekly Chapel Program, where Father Matt joyfully instills the values of love, kindness and respect each week. These are the qualities that make Millbrook Community Preschool so unique, and as long as we value the idea of choice, are able to ensure program sustainability, and remain adaptable to the changing needs of the community, I believe this program will remain necessary and relevant.

Again this year, I sign off with gratitude for all the support we have, pride in all we have accomplished, devotion to the children and families we serve, and much hope for the future. I feel so blessed to be connected to the Grace Church community.

Respectfully,  
Maureen Sarma  
Program Director

## **Food Outreach Report**

### **Grace Church Lunchbox Mission**

Grace continues to serve meals at Dutchess Outreach on the last Sunday of the month. We serve a hot meal to well over 150 clients on Sunday. The patrons express their gratitude and thanks to Grace Church Millbrook and the volunteers preparing and serving the meals. The veterans home in Poughkeepsie often sends a volunteer to deliver twenty extra meals to them.

Our meals are prepared fresh, and typically consist of pasta with meat sauce, mixed vegetables, buttered bread, a dessert, milk, water, fruit and a breakfast bar for the next morning. The average monthly cost of the food purchased by Grace is \$400. We would welcome your monetary contributions to support this much needed mission.

We would like to thank Kyle Knauf, Lynne Kramer, Thea Scotti, Susan Nestle, Linda Kolts, Jonathan Boice, Will, Aidan and Evan Cox, James and Nina Prudden, for all their help this past year!

If you have any questions about contributions or volunteering, please reach out to us!

Submitted by Lisa and John Lacey

### **Food of Life/Comida de Vida Food Pantry at St. Thomas Church in Amenia**

**All hail the strong and sturdy volunteers who load 3 tons of food into a U-Haul at Dutchess Community College every other Monday, to benefit Food of Life/Comida de Vida Food Pantry at St Thomas Church in Amenia.** Doing God's work and having fun doing it! A plea was made for more Grace participants and five parishioners answered the call. The group now includes from Grace: ML Ball, Kyle Knauf, Sherry Kneipper, Linda Kolts, James Prudden and Fred Schwinger. Many volunteers also help distribute food on Fridays in Amenia. Contact Barbara Rudy for more information.

Submitted by ML Ball

## IWC report for 2026 Annual Meeting

Invite, Welcome, Connect was established at Grace Church in 2019 and continues to have a positive impact on the congregation and local community. Current members of IWC include Cindy Guardiola, Val Larobardier, Cathy Shanks, Marion Thompson, Beth Willis and Amanda Williams. While we did not hold as many events in 2025 as the previous year, our drive and purpose remained strong.

This year, we pushed the Cabin Fever event to March to allow for slightly warmer weather and longer days. It was another successful year with an abundance of good games, food and camaraderie. The event saw new faces and had approximately as many people as the year prior.

In September, IWC hosted an ice cream social after the 10am service alongside a ministry fair to kick off the program year. That day, the service had a blessing for the children and teachers going back to school as well as a recommitment to Christian Service for people involved in the various ministries so there were many people in attendance. It was a joyous gathering of families and people of all ages and might have been the sweetest brunch of the year.

Later that month, IWC spearheaded Grace's presence at Community Day in Millbrook. Once again, the crew came together to make goodie bags for the children and packets of information about Grace for adults. New signage and a bubble machine added pizzazz to the booth.

Our faithful group looks forward to 2026 and all that is in store. If anyone is interested in joining IWC, please don't hesitate to reach out to one of our members.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Williams

## Report on Cornerstone Consultancy's Mustard Seed Assessment

Beginning in June 2025, Cornerstone Consultancy, LLC. conducted a four-month comprehensive, organizational review of Grace Church's strengths, assets, and internal systems with the goal of developing a *Mustard Seed Assessment*. The *Mustard Seed Assessment* is an individualized plan designed to highlight strengths within a congregation, outline priorities that resonate with both parishioners and the larger community and explore areas of growth to reposition a church toward renewed engagement and sustainable impact.

First releasing its Parish Gift Survey in June 2025, Cornerstone Consultancy focused on several key areas in its screening of parishioners including factors that influence attendance, affiliations with other community organizations, professional experience and skills, opinions on current challenges, and priorities for Grace's future direction. In tandem with the release of the Parish Gift Survey, individual interviews were conducted with members of the Vestry and volunteer parishioners. After Cornerstone Consultancy's review of the Grace's giving trends and status of communications, a Stakeholder Selection Poll was shared with members of the Vestry to prioritize 10 interviewees for a series of "community mapping" interviews. Interviews were conducted from August 2025 through October 2025 via in-person and virtual meetings with representatives from the Village of Millbrook, Millbrook Business Association, Dyson Foundation, Millbrook Library, St. Thomas, Millbrook Community Preschool, Millbrook Arts Group, and the Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley. Monthly workshops were held with the Vestry to review findings and offer opportunities for reflection throughout the planning process. A complete report was presented to the Vestry in early November.

As a focal point of Grace Church's *Mustard Seed Assessment*, Cornerstone Consultancy outlined its A.C.T. Plan—a reflective and practical roadmap that organizes a set of measurable outcomes and activities within three implementation pillars: Activate, Cultivate, and Thread. Together, these pillars translate Grace's identity into action through strategies that are designed to strengthen communications, deepen stewardship, and extend the church's impact within the wider Millbrook community. Complete with a 3-year Resource Development Plan to increase Grace Church's giving capacity and a 1-year Communications Improvement Plan, recommendations were made to significantly increase community engagement, organizational visibility, and mission reach. From reimagining how Grace tells its story and engages volunteers to exploring how its sacred spaces can serve as catalysts for fellowship and service, the A.C.T. Plan offers a framework that builds on Grace's enduring promise of "Deep Roots and Open Doors," positioning the parish not only as a sanctuary of faith, but as a vibrant anchor for civic

and spiritual life. The Vestry will take up these and other recommendations in a strategic planning meeting in February 2026. We thank the Dyson Foundation for funding this effort and look forward to working with the Vestry and people of Grace Church on the next steps of planning and implementation.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Wilson, Frederic Cruz, Principals of Cornerstone Consultancy, LLC.

For the Parish

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

For the Church

Let us pray.

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world

see and know that things which were being cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity

of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**