

May 17, 2026 Phone 845 343-6101 FAX 845 343-8321 www.gracechurchmiddletown.org

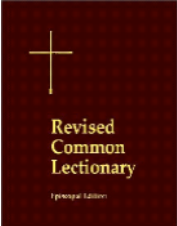
email secretary.grace.episcopal@gmail.com

Seventh Sunday of Easter May 12th (Rite I)



**"Patriotism consists not in waving the flag, but in striving that our country shall be righteous as well as strong."
~James Bryce**

Subdeacon/Chalice	Allison McLean
MC/2nd Chalice	Torry Guardino
Thurifer	
Crucifer	
Acolyte	Janet Cusack
Acolyte	
OT Lector	Charlotte Durma
NT Lector	Carla Boyer
Intercessor	Mark Strunsky
Ushers	Mark Strunsky John Cusack
Use our audio mixer to listen to the 9:30 Sunday Mass live. Click Here	
To watch Sunday Mass on Facebook live. Click Here	
For the Sunday prayer bulletin. Click Here	



Website for Lectionary Readings

The webpage is in calendar form - just click on the date and you will see the readings for that day.

<https://www.lectionarypage.net/CalndrsIndexes/Calendar2026.html>

Upcoming Events

Sunday May 17th	9:30 AM Sunday Eucharist in-person and on-line (Rite I) Monthly Vestry Meeting
Wednesday May 20th	10:00 AM Healing Mass
Sunday May 24th	9:30 AM Sunday Eucharist in-person and on-line (Rite II) Pentecost Sunday
Monday May 25th	Memorial Day - Office closed
Wednesday May 27th	10:00 AM Healing Mass
Sunday May 31st	9:30 AM Sunday Eucharist in-person and on-line (Rite I)
Wednesday June 3rd	10:00 AM Healing Mass
Sunday June 7th	9:30 Am Morning Prayer in-person and on-line (Rite II)
Wednesday June 10th	10:00 AM Healing Mass

The Photography Corner



I took this photograph of a Zinnia last fall while picking pumpkins in Virginia. Its vivid pink color contrasts beautifully with the yellow stamens.

I would like to thank all who have shared photographs with us. I do need some more photographs if you could send a few. ~Joe

Grace Episcopal Church Annual Meeting Round-up

On Sunday, May 3rd, the 181st Annual Meeting of Grace Episcopal Church was held. The following slate of candidates was elected to represent Grace Church: Warden - John Cusack; Vestry Member - Lorraine Witkowski; Vestry Member - Lucas Spisso; Delegate to Convention - Anne Caldwell and Alternate Delegate to Convention - Michelle Tubbs.

Don Boyer was acknowledged and thanked for his work with our Music Ministry, just one of the many hats he wears.

The Vestry still needs a volunteer to serve as Clerk to the Vestry. If you are interested in serving in any of these positions, please contact Fr. Victor, Claire Newquist or John Cusack. ~Joe



ShopRite Grocery Gift Cards are available for sale EVERY Sunday after each service. Grace Church receives 5% on the sale of the cards from ShopRite, while you purchase the cards at face value! ShopRite gift cards can make shopping for the family easy. Our ongoing fundraiser of ShopRite gift cards helps you prepare your holiday meals while helping Grace Church. Please keep us in mind when preparing your shopping lists!

We are happy and pleased to announce that we can accept credit card purchases for the ShopRite gift cards. So, if you use a rewards credit card you can now accumulate points while supporting Grace Church! To purchase gift cards, please see either Eileen or Claire.

Mystic Poets Society

This week's submission was sent to us by Eileen Bloomer. Thank you Eileen!
If you have a poem or reflection that you would consider sharing with your fellow parishioners, please send it to me. Thank you. Joe.

A thin sliver of moon, the crescent moon, the moon glowing gold to silver to white,
rises golden just before sunrise. then fading into the coming light.
A distant mourning dove calls; And I see here now
I hear the song through an open door. how the earth turns,
I drink warm water from a white cup how the moon travels,
and speak words out loud everything in motion,
here, now, like the birds. I watch the moon and I know I am a traveler too.
travel through the horizon of trees, ~Eileen



Please join us on May 20th, in supporting the Guild of St. Margaret through HV Gives, a 24-hour online giving event that celebrates and supports nonprofit organizations throughout the Hudson Valley. Hudson Valley Gives brings together hundreds of local nonprofits for one day of generosity and community impact.

One of the exciting parts of Hudson Valley Gives is the opportunity for donations to go even further through matching gifts, incentive prizes, and special challenges throughout the day. These opportunities help maximize the impact of every contribution, no matter the size.

Please consider making a gift to support the Guild of St. Margaret. You can donate directly by visiting <https://bit.ly/HVGSM> or by scanning the QR code provided below. Thank you for helping us continue our mission of service and compassion in our community.

Carolanne Cusack
Executive Director
Guild of St. Margaret



**181st Annual Meeting of Grace Episcopal Church
Rector's Report
May 3, 2026**

The year from our last meeting till today has proven to be remarkably busy and at times genuinely intense. Over the last year the median rental costs for an apartment in Middletown has climbed to \$2300 a month. Homelessness and hunger continue to be an issue in our environment. With our partners in the Greater Middletown Interfaith Council, members of the congregation and I supported the Warming Station over the winter months, which turned away an average of three people a night due to being at capacity. On nights when the temperature was expected to drop below freezing, these individuals were connected with 311, or other county resources, for emergency shelter.

Carolanne Cusack has prepared a beautiful and detailed report for you about the activities of the Guild of Saint Margaret, and I recommend it highly. In thumbnail this has been a year of transition with Phyllis Guardino fully stepping down from the Guild's Leadership. Carolanne has secured some extra grants which will allow us to update much of the equipment in the kitchen and improve the smooth running of the Guild. Please take a good look at her report.

We have continued to run the office without a parish secretary, and I want to especially acknowledge the folks who have made this possible. Claire Newquist and Janet Cusack have continued to take care of bank deposits, bill paying and a myriad of miscellaneous tasks. Thank you, ladies! I continue to draft and print the Sunday bulletins but would be at a total loss without the support of David Brokaw and Claire Newquist. They work behind the scenes to edit my rough work and make it ready for publication, thank you both!

Don Boyer and our choir members bring a mighty and beautiful gift of music to our worship life here at Grace, please take time to thank them.

We have certainly had a collection of physical plant maintenance challenges, since our last meeting. We had minor flooding and mold in the basement of the parish house which I am happy to report is fully mitigated. The next phase of that work will be to clear out items that we no longer need to store down there and decide how to best make use of the space.

We have had a dumpster fire which damaged the windows in the lady's restroom as well as ventilation louvers for the boiler room. Please thank Ivonne Brands (manager of our food pantry program) and her volunteers for quickly getting the fire department on scene, they were able to knock down the flames before they made their way inside our building. And, before we could get the insurance claim processed, the Parish House boiler gave up on us. Our insurance carrier has approved the estimates for the repair and cleanup of the fire damage; I am hopeful we will have that work underway soon.

We also have a proposal for a new boiler, and I am in the process of running that through our insurance just in case there is some portion that they will cover. We do have a clause protecting our "equipment." Maybe this will come through for us.

From early May of last year to the present we have baptized three children: Fedley Rodriguez, Lucas Spisso, Jr., Scarlett Woods.

Over that same time. We have entrusted three of our beloved members into God's eternal care: Daniel Bornander, Dennis McGuire and Kenneth Carpenter; may they rest in God's peace and love.

Respectfully submitted by,
The Rev. Victor J. Sarrazin, Rector

Warden's Report 2026 (For the year 2025)

Congratulations to John for being elected to another term as Warden; it has been my pleasure to work with John over the years, and I look forward to another year. Congratulations also to Lorraine for being elected to her second Vestry term and to Lucas for being elected to his first term.

Once again 2025 was a year of some ups and downs for Grace Church. On a positive note, we have seen a steady increase in our Sunday attendance numbers. We also saw the opening of our new Church School; something that we have not had at Grace since the pandemic. Many thanks to Morgan Spisso and all who have been helping her. Our two major fundraising events, the Tricky Tray and Holiday Fair, were very successful. Our Soup Kitchen and Food Pantry programs continued to provide daily meals and groceries to those in need in the Middletown area. On a less positive note, our building suffered some significant water damage to the basement which required costly remediation and has left the basement in disarray. Fortunately, we have been reimbursed for the cost of the remediation, but we still face some decisions about what to do with the basement space. (Not to get too far ahead, problems impacting the buildings have continued this year.)

I have often spoken of our need to make some decisions about where we want to see Grace Church go in the future. This is a question that we still need to grapple with. Starting a Church School suggests that we want to reach out to families with children who might benefit. How will we do that? Don has continued to work on growing the choir and trying some exciting new music. Is this something that will help attract more people to Grace? If so, how can we help? Downtown Middletown is changing; there are new stores and businesses opening. At some point, the new apartments next door may be occupied. Will any of the residents be looking for a church family? How can we reach out to and welcome them? These are questions that we need to ask and answer. Our church is more than buildings and outreach programs. It is also a community of people that needs to be nurtured. This won't happen if we chose to sit in the pews and wait for people to come in the door.

Speaking of coming in the door, we also need to acknowledge that some people are walking out the door. Joe and Eileen Barrett will very soon be moving to their new home in Maryland. While I know that both of them plan to stay connected to Grace Church and Middletown for now, they will no longer be weekly presences here. As time passes they will find new friends and even a new parish family near their new home. Many thanks for all the gifts they have brought to Grace and their continued commitment to us. Thanks also to Allison for her service as Treasurer; and to Anne Caldwell for her work on the Vestry.

~Claire Newquist, Warden

Warden's Report

As we gather today, let us take a moment to look back on the past year and reflect on where we are as a church family. Grace Church continues to be a place where people find connection, comfort, and purpose. This happens because of the commitment of our members, the strength of our shared faith, and dedication to our community.

One of the real blessings of Grace Church is our endowment. It provides stability and allows us to plan ahead with confidence. It helps us maintain our buildings, support our ministries, and weather unexpected expenses. At the same time, the endowment alone cannot sustain the full cost of our mission. Pledge income and fundraising remain essential to our day-to-day operations and to the vitality of our ministries. The generosity of our members—through annual giving, special gifts, and participation in fundraising efforts—continues to be the backbone of our financial health. The endowment is essential, but our congregation's ongoing support is what keeps our ministries thriving.

The Guild of St. Margaret Soup Kitchen and Food Pantry continues to be one of the most

meaningful ways we serve our neighbors. Guests are welcomed with warmth, the meals are prepared with care, and the atmosphere reflects the compassion we want to share with our community. Carolanne and her staff do an incredible job managing an army of volunteers and community service workers to make this often challenging mission possible. Their hard work ensures that the GSM remains a place where every guest is seen, valued and nourished.

Another bright spot this year has been the renewal of our Sunday School program. Under the leadership of Morgan Spisso, and with the help of a team of dedicated teachers, Sunday School has once again become a lively, engaging space for our youngest members. Young families will now have the opportunity to be more connected to the life of the church. This revitalization is a hopeful sign for our future and a reminder of how important it is to nurture faith across generations.

Our music program continues to enrich our worship life in meaningful ways. Under the leadership of Don Boyer, the choir continues to bring beauty and depth to our services throughout the year. Their dedication adds a sense of joy and reverence to the Mass.

Like many churches, we are seeing the effects of an aging congregation. It is something we feel in attendance, in volunteer capacity, and in the energy of our programs. We need to keep exploring ways to connect with younger families and individuals; and outreach to communities that have traditionally not been part of the worship life of Grace Church. This is essential if we are to stay vibrant and relevant for years to come.

Our church and rectory are beautiful, meaningful spaces—but they are also old, and old buildings need attention. Repairs and maintenance are ongoing realities for us. We are especially grateful to Joe Barrett and the Building and Grounds Committee for their continued dedication and hard work in caring for these facilities. Caring for these spaces is part of our responsibility to the generations that came before us and the ones who will come after. It is a challenge, but it is also part of what it means to steward a historic church. This presents real financial difficulties that we must address. Finding sustainable ways to fund these essential repairs is a priority we must solve to ensure our historic home does not become an overwhelming burden.

We are also grateful for the leadership of Fr. Vic, who not only serves as a steady spiritual leader for our congregation but is deeply engaged in the wider community. Through his dedicated work with GMIC and his "The Rev and Rav" partnership with Rabbi Sisen, he continues to strengthen interfaith relationships and build community understanding.

Furthermore, our daily operations and fiscal health are made possible by the dedicated service of our volunteers. We extend our sincere thanks to Phyllis Guardino in her new role as Treasurer; Janet Cusack, who serves as our Financial Secretary and Assistant Treasurer for the Church; and Michelle Tubbs as Assistant Treasurer for the Guild of St Margaret. Their commitment ensures that our finances are managed with care and integrity. A debt of gratitude is also due to Lorraine Witkowski, whose work as Office Assistant keeps our administrative life running smoothly.

No warden's report would be complete without recognizing the tremendous contributions of Claire Newquist. Her deep and broad involvement in so many aspects of life at Grace Church is truly inspiring. Whether she is offering her wisdom in leadership, coordinating essential parish activities, or lending a hand to our various church programs, her tireless commitment continues to enrich our shared ministry in profound ways. We are incredibly fortunate to benefit from her energy and knowledge.

As we look toward the year ahead, we find ourselves in a position of both strength and significant challenges. We are blessed with a substantial endowment and ministries that continue to support our shared mission. Yet, we must also meet the challenges of our time: maintaining our historic buildings and finding new ways to engage with our community. But with our shared faith and the dedication of our congregation, we can work together to ensure that Grace Church remains a place for all who seek community and a spiritual home.

~John Cusack, Warden



Grace Calendar

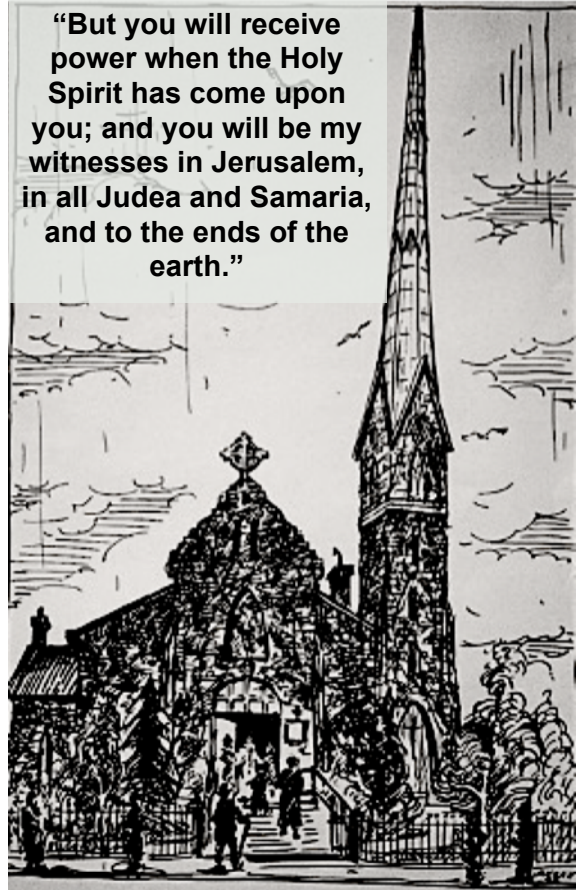
Vestry News

The next Vestry meeting will be held in the boardroom on Sunday May 17th starting at 11:15 AM.

All are invited to attend!

[Click here to read the minutes of the February 15, 2026 Vestry meeting.](#)

[Click here to read the minutes of the March 15, 2026 Vestry meeting.](#)



“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

GRACE CHURCH 1948

Your Grace Church Vestry.

Wardens:

John Cusack

Claire Newquist

Clerk of the Vestry:

Treasurer:

Phyllis Guardino

Vestry:

Lorraine Witkowski

Lucas Spisso

Barbara Chumard

Michelle Tubbs

Analise Reed

Joseph Barrett

Mark Strunsky

Eileen Bloomer

Torry Guardino

David White (Student member of Vestry)