

SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT  
Grace in the Desert Annual Meeting (Virtual), January 31, 2021

My time as a Vestry member and your Senior Warden of Grace in the Desert ends today. The opportunity to serve Grace in such ways has been a great honor, privilege and joy. I want to thank the people that have made that happen but first a personal overview of some events since our last Annual Meeting. Grace is close to the end of its first year operating within the confines of the COVID-19 world. A year ago COVID-19 was barely on our radar screens and we looked to a well-planned transition year wherein Grace's ministries would continue to flourish and grow and Fr. Shannon's service to Grace would be appropriately recognized, culminating in a retirement celebration in November. At the last in person service in Grace's sanctuary on March 8 those hopes still existed but concerns were rising. The more optimistic among us thought the virus was overstated and surely not as bad as a normal flu year. Margie and I attended sessions of the Pac 12 women's basketball tournament that weekend at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center but noticed a heightened level of cleanliness, e.g. attendants wiping railings around the arena throughout the games. By Thursday and Friday, March 12-13, we were more concerned but still able to help resettle two refugees from Iran and Iraq, respectively, but without our normal trip to the airport to meet them. The next day, Saturday, March 14, after assessing the worsening situation, Fr. Shannon suspended in person services at Grace. I was extremely proud that Grace had acted to protect its parishioners without being ordered to do so by any other party, diocesan or governmental. The next day Assisting Bishop Waggoner ordered that all in person services within the diocese be suspended. Since March 15, 2020, our church life has been largely dictated by the constant, often worsening omnipresence of COVID-19 yet Grace has persevered with pre-recorded services, a virtual coffee hour, Sunday School Zoom programs and, more recently, outdoor in person services, maintaining itself as a bright light in a year filled with so much darkness. How has that been possible? It's been possible because clergy and laity at Grace have made it happen. For the remainder of my report I'd like to thank some of those people. For anyone I fail to thank I

apologize in advance and hope that someone else will speak up and thank them, now or at a later time.

THANKS TO:

CLERGY: Thanks to all our clergy, active or retired, for their dedicated service during the most difficult of circumstances, including Fr. Shannon, Rev. JoAnn, Rev. Angela Anderson, Rev. Dr. Jim Wallis, Rev. Jim Cooke, Dcn. James Hobart, Dcn. Barbara Lewis and Dcn. Barbara Preas . My special thanks to:

FATHER SHANNON: As Sr. Warden I have worked very closely with Fr. Shannon for several years, including over 200 weekly one on one meetings to discuss Grace's needs and how to address them. Every time I left one of such meetings I knew that I was a better person and Grace was a better church because of Fr. Shannon's presence among us. Rather than retire in November as originally planned he stayed on to see Grace through the pandemic. This required reinventing himself as a video minister whose schedule was turned upside down because of the new deadlines applicable to our recorded services. Then late last year he added the responsibility of presiding at Grace's outdoor in person service. Notwithstanding the immense stress associated with being a parish priest during these difficult times Fr. Shannon stayed the course, delaying a well earned retirement to protect and preserve Grace during this time of trial. Because of such personal sacrifice Grace will be fully ready to move forward this spring when, as we all pray, the pandemic will finally be receding. Thank you Fr. Shannon. My additional thanks to:

CHILDREN AND YOUTH COORDINATOR: Tee Gammon

JUNIOR WARDEN: As Sr. Warden I benefitted greatly from Patricia Holbrook Seay's service as Junior Warden until her Vestry term ended last year. This year I have been privileged to work with Michael Yackira as Junior Warden. He has been a tremendous support for me and Grace during the last year.

YOUR VESTRY: (Michael Yackira, Larry Holmes, Walt Kadyk, Cheryl Bruni, Jan Rowell, Samaaa Bush, Larry Davis and Ra Simmons, all of whom are devoted to the best interests of Grace and its parishioners, and to Deb Carter for her service as Vestry Clerk.

CHOIR/ORGANIST: Heather Rampton, Travis Lohmann, Paul Biddle, Gwen Baccus

VIDEOGRAPHY/TECHNICAL SUPPORT: Heather Rampton, Paul Biddle, Dcn. James

LECTORS: Michael Yackira and all those who do the readings

LABYRINTH TEAM: Cheryl Bruni, Wayne Adams, Carroll Senn and all who have helped create and beautify our Labyrinth and gardens

USHERS: Ra Simmons, Walt Kadyk, Mark Romero, Kathy Klein, Lena Fontein, John and Jackie Normandeau

ALTAR GUILD: Co-chairs Margie Turner and Toni Mayberry and the Altar Guild team, special thanks to Toni, who has moved back to Wisconsin, for her many years of devoted service to Grace.

FLOWERS: Mamie Hechter

THANKSGIVING AND ADVENT OUTREACH: Special thanks to all who acted to assure, financially and otherwise, that Grace would still be able, in the midst of the pandemic, to provide turkeys and gifts for those in need during Thanksgiving and Advent, including Don and Beth LeHeup, Gwen Baccus and Patricia Holbrook Seay.

REFUGEES: Special thanks to Lana Heaney who baked bread and cookies for our four refugee families during Advent showing them in a very personal way that, notwithstanding COVID-19 challenges, they had not been forgotten by Grace and its parishioners.

THOSE WHO HELP ASSURE THAT GRACE'S ASSETS ARE PROPERLY MANAGED, PRESERVED AND REPLENISHED: Business Manager, Bill Terry, Bill's commitment to professionalism and the highest ethical values makes everyone else's job so much easier; ditto the work of Grace's Treasurer Jay Lifter; Finance Committee (including at large members Maureen Augustin, Cheryl Bruni and Bert Beatty); Larry Holmes and all those who have served on the Stewardship Committee; and, most importantly, YOU, the people who have supported the church so generously during a very tough time.

COMMUNICATIONS: Rev. Angela (e-News) and Susan and Bob Cooper (website). Since we can't see each other on a regular basis communications have never been more important to Grace.

II. SEARCH COMMITTEE: Larry Holmes (Chair), Susan Cooper, Steven Goforth, Kathy Klein, Kate Newman, Tim Parker and Robert Turner. Lora Barber will serve as a non-voting committee member available to replace any voting member who should become unable to serve.

### III. ELECTION RESULTS

Our deepest thanks to all those who submitted their names as candidates for the Vestry and as Convention delegates. Each such person would add much to the Vestry and would represent Grace well at the Convention. Speaking as a person who has lost several Vestry elections, I hope that those who did not obtain the Vestry or Delegate position they sought this time will not be deterred at all from seeking such position another time. HEATHER, WOULD YOU PLEASE POST THE ELECTION RESULTS. As you can see, those elected are:

VESTRY:

CONVENTION DELEGATES:

Special thanks to the Tellers who generously volunteered their time to count each ballot's votes (Maureen Augustin, Bert Beatty, Mamie Hechter and Don LeHeup).

CLOSING: In closing I'd like to thank you again for the privilege of being your Senior Warden. Grace has never had better leaders than those it will have going forward from this meeting. I join with you in the excitement of new beginnings and opportunities in a world we pray will be safer and healthier and in supporting Grace and its ministries in any way possible. Thank you.

