

May  
2024

GRACE NOTES  
ENCOURAGEMENT  
FOR LIFE  
TOGETHER AT  
GRACE UMC



PERSONAL  
TESTIMONY



LAY LEADER'S  
MESSAGE



THANK YOU  
NOTE

# GRACE NOTES

## A Love for Music

by Kay Ellis

Boy! Do I miss it!! The thundering of 24 voices in four parts with full organ, offering our thanks to God on a Sunday morning. But, times do change; our culture changes and so do we.

They've never been able to shut me up. When I was five years old at Hedding UMC in Barre, I could not figure out why we didn't sing all the verses of the first line of a hymn, then all the verses of the second line and when we got to the last line of the third verse, we could be all done. No going back and repeating. Then I started 1st grade and taking piano lessons and found out why! We had a junior choir which I accompanied, and when I entered high school I joined the senior choir. On Thursdays we had Jr. Choir rehearsal after school, then a piano lesson, and at 7pm, Sr. Choir rehearsal. I quite often developed a migraine headache. It wasn't until we had a Lay Witness Mission at Grace Church when a missionary led me to Christ that the migraines disappeared! PTL!!

At home, we never had a lot of money, so I had a paper route. My Mom and I split the cost and we bought a Wurlitzer piano. It had the same length strings as in a baby grand. In high school and college, I was in some musicals and did accompaniments. There is a big difference between playing the piano and accompanying a singer. It takes practice.

Looking back, I never asked for a job in music. It always happened when someone asked me to do something. At Grace, a pastor's wife asked me to play for Jr. Choir. When Rev. Hank Cheney was here, his wife Karen started a Liturgical Dance group. Every time we sing "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee" I can still see the girls dancing down the aisles in our homemade robes and scarfs. After she left I continued it. I seem to do everything in 10 year increments. It took a while for me to join Sr. Choir. I talked to the director, Ruth Hanson,



and evidently they had lots of sopranos so she told me she'd rather have my husband as she needed more men! Well, then I went to work in the Sunday School and when Hugh Impey retired, I became the superintendent. (Another 10 years!) We had almost 100 children from nursery through high school. (Where are they now?)

Did you know we used to have musicals here at Grace? They were held on the stage in Fellowship Hall. Ruth Hanson put them together and directed each one. Solos, duets, monologues, jokes, choir numbers and skits. Lots of practice and such fun!! Ask Carolyn and Charlotte about them!

In the mid 70s I attended a Music Conference in West Virginia and fell in love with English Handbells. Russ Hutchins started a fund and within a year we were the proud owners of a 5 octave set of Schulmerich bells. I had learned by then how to direct so we recruited some volunteers and started playing. Known as "Bells of Grace," we played in church almost monthly, attended and rang at annual bell ringing events, at nursing homes, and combined with the choir at times. As with all of the music I was involved with, it was never a performance, it was always an offering to God.

Even the 4-H girls were involved. We went to the Big E in Springfield, MA, marched in the parades, and played at the VT building. My reward was to be a counselor sleeping in a dorm room with 50 other women and girls!

When our organist, Helen Sleeper, died three weeks before Easter, Ruth asked me to try the organ. I had taken one organ lesson in Barre, years before but if she thought I could do it, I tried. She chose easier than usual choir music and it worked out. I had several conversations

with that organ and we came to an understanding that if I practiced, I could manage two hands and at least one foot. So I did that for 10 years. When Jayne Sager became organist and Ruth retired, I became the choir director. And when Jayne moved on, I did both jobs. Our signature hymn of praise was "Majesty." If you have a chance to hear the recording of our choir concerts, you'll have shivers!

Another favorite, besides renditions of "The Messiah," was "On Eagle's Wings," which is based on Psalms 91.

Both the bells and the choir ran out of volunteers after 35-40 years. In the meantime, the Praise Band arrived. We lost some members, but newer younger folk were happier. As with old hymns, some of the newer praise songs were based on Scripture and enhanced the preaching, format in the bulletin, and our experiences. With social media available, many of us "oldsters" learned new ways of praising God.

I wish I could still sing. I used to be a lyric soprano and I could hit high C. Now I'm a tenor and hover around middle C.

God gifted me with a love for music and I have been blessed to use it in many ways. Thank you, God, for the opportunities you have given me.

*"God has gifted me with a love for music and I have been blessed to use it in many ways."*

**"The Lord your God is with you,  
he is mighty to save.  
He will take great delight in you;  
he will quiet you with his love,  
he will rejoice over you with singing."**

*Zephaniah 3:17*

# Easter Life

by Lay Leader, Laurie Bedard

I love seeing the signs of spring showing up in my yard and everywhere I've been recently. Even if green leaves aren't evident on our Northeast Kingdom trees yet, you can see the different colors of the new buds starting to appear. I'm not always a fan of change but I certainly embrace the changes that springtime brings. I love these changes because they represent new life. The dead looking bushes, the bulbs hidden deep in the ground looking dry and lifeless, show signs of healthy, amazing, and I think, miraculous, growth.

What a wonderful example nature is of God's love and His promises. Roots deep in cold hard ground, covered by snow, are capable of bursting forth in a beautiful array of verdant growth. Easter life is evident in nature all around us, our eyes take it in, our spirits are lifted and renewed. This miracle happens year after year. I find it amazing. I think it's why I love our seasons, they remind me explicitly of God's faithfulness, of how perfect His plans are. Living in a place with a warm climate where I could wear flip flops year round holds some appeal in late February but I honestly would miss the absolute beauty of Vermont spring. Short as our spring can be, it's worth not missing it.

Grace Church is fast approaching a time of change. It can feel uncertain or unsettling. What will our new pastor be like? How might he change things we've become accustomed to? How will he lead us in the years ahead? As I previously said, change is not always my first choice, it's outside my comfort zone. The signs of spring I've just mentioned though remind me that change can mean growth. It can bring forth new life, luxurious, abundant life.

**Join our AGG  
(A Grace-ful Group)  
on Facebook!**



**Please join us!**

## **Women's Fellowship for Spiritual Renewal**

**~ May 12th ~**

**Second Sunday of the month following  
the morning service.**

**Come as you are, when you can!**

**For more information,  
please contact Marie Sullivan.  
[msullivan0905@gmail.com](mailto:msullivan0905@gmail.com)  
802-274-3069**

After Jesus' resurrection his physical body was changed. He was recognizable, he broke bread with his disciples but he also could do some pretty special things that he hadn't done before, like suddenly appear in the room with them. That's a very cool change I think. New life, resurrection life, came with a change.

I don't expect our new pastor to bring miraculous change on his own, but I do believe if we trust and embrace God's plans for us we just might see the possible growth that the Lord offers. I believe Grace Church has deep roots, grounded and nurtured by God's love. With great hope, we can look forward to a spring-like, Easter kind of new life. It won't depend on our Northeast Kingdom weather; it will need the open, good soil of our hearts and minds.

Blessings, Laurie

# Thank You Note

\*FROM KATHY MARTIN, CHURCH RELATIONS  
VOLUNTEER VT NORTH AREA

Thank you for your faithful participation with Operation Christmas Child sharing God's love with children in need around the world. 8,114 shoebox gifts were collected in Northern Vermont, a part of more than 11,330,126 from across the US.

Each gift can reach 10 or more people with the Good News of Jesus! Not everyone is able to pack a shoe box, but donations of time, money and prayer were greatly appreciated. Shoeboxes from Northern VT went to Burundi, Panama, and Zambia. Many children who received shoeboxes will attend "The Greatest Journey" discipleship course where they learn how to share the gospel with friends and family.

Since 2009 more than 20.3 million children have made decisions for Christ. [If you'd like to be involved throughout the year], there is a Facebook group called "OCC Vermont North" whose purpose is to encourage and support each other by sharing ideas and praises.

*\*From an email dated 3/23/24 from Kathy Martin, summarized by Pam Smith.*

## What has God been doing in your life?

Would you be willing to write a short testimony or reflection for a future Grace Notes newsletter?

Please consider sharing what God has been doing in your life, how you've heard his voice, felt his spirit, or seen his hand at work.

Reach out to Cindy to participate in this opportunity to encourage one another with God's faithfulness. Thank you!

Contact Cindy at the church office:  
802-748-2895

## *The Breath of God Within Us*

*from Bread for the Journey by Henri J. M. Nouwen*

When we speak about the Holy Spirit, we speak about the breath of God breathing in us. The Greek word for "spirit" is *pneuma*, which means "breath." We are seldom aware of our breathing. It is so essential for life that we only think about it when something is wrong with it.

The Spirit of God is like our breath. God's spirit is more intimate to us than we are to ourselves. We might not often be aware of it, but without it we cannot live a "spiritual life." It is the Holy Spirit of God who prays in us, who offers us the gifts of love, forgiveness, kindness, goodness, gentleness, peace, and joy. It is the Holy Spirit who offers us the life that death cannot destroy.

Let us always pray, "Come, Holy Spirit, come."

**DIFFERENT GIFTS...**

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

*1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (NIV)*

**...BUT THE SAME FRUIT**

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

*Galatians 5:22-23a, 25 (NIV)*

**FROM THE SAME SPIRIT.**

**THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT**



*BiblePuzzles.com*

*Galatians 5:22-23*

**FAITHFULNESS  
GENTLENESS  
GOODNESS  
JOY  
KINDNESS  
LOVE**



**PATIENCE  
PEACE  
SELF-CONTROL**

**THANK YOU**

to our Liturgists, Fellowship Hosts, Musical Talent, Audio-Video Techs, Ushers, and Greeters for your valuable services this month. Grace couldn't function without all of you. Thank you!

# May 2024

- US Holidays
- Pastor's Schedule
- Anniversaries
- Birthdays
- Church Happenings

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 Pastor Sabbatical 10:30 AM Sunday Worship	29 11:00 AM Community Luncheon	30	1 Pastor Vacation Chuck Perkins	2 Tim & Army Bedor Carolyn Wright 7:00 AM Prayer & Share	3	4
5 Pastor Vacation	6 11:00 AM Community Luncheon	7	8 Kenna Gingue	9 7:00 AM Prayer & Share	10	11
12 Pastor Vacation Mother's Day 10:30 AM Sunday Worship	13 11:00 AM Community Luncheon	14	15	16	17	18
19 10:30 AM Sunday Worship	20 11:00 AM Community Luncheon	21	22	23 7:00 AM Prayer & Share	24	25
26 10:30 AM Sunday Worship	27 Memorial Day 11:00 AM Community Luncheon	28	29	30 7:00 AM Prayer & Share	31	1