



**“GROW IN GRACE  
AND IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST”**

—2 Peter 3:18

Our Next Quarter Century: 1961-1986

Written under the direction  
of the Communications/Information Commission  
of the Vestry by the original authors of 1961's

## **A Century of Grace**

Mrs. John B. (Anne) Adams  
Mrs. Edward (Bartlett) Leber

Mrs. J. Beverly (Faith) Harvie  
Mrs. William A. (Ann) Owens

## THE REV. GEORGE FRANK REGAS

George Frank Regas, whose background is outlined in *A Century of Grace*, was instituted as the seventh Rector of Grace Church on June 19th, 1960, during preparations for the 100th Anniversary of the church's founding. He set up a program of both spiritual and physical expansion of the Parish.

In 1961 the Rev. Frederick S. Wandall joined the staff as Assistant, after completing a three-year Masters Fellowship at Oxford University. After two years at Grace, Mr. Wandall moved to New Paltz and then returned to his native Virginia and her renowned Episcopal private schools.

Property on Birchwood Avenue, Upper Nyack, was purchased and a new Rectory was built. The former Rectory became Babbitt House and was remodeled into offices and classrooms; the former Babbitt House became The Annex, used for the sexton's living quarters and for the Nursery. The Lounge, renamed Patterson Hall, was remodeled and redecorated, and extra second floor classrooms were added.

Organist Edwin (Ted) Flath re-established a Boys' choir to sing with the Senior Choir at the 11 a.m. Service, while the Youth and St. Cecelia Choirs still participated in the 9:15 a.m. Service.

By 1964 it had become apparent that a new organ was a necessity. In 1965 the various women's organizations—The Rector's Aides, St. Martha's Guild, and the women's Auxiliary—were dissolved and a new organization, The Episcopal Church

Women, encompassing all female members of the Church, was established. The Altar Guild alone remained autonomous. The ECW set up an Organ Fund, and the 1964 Annual Bazaar was designated The Organ Fund Bazaar.

Contemplation of the enormous expenditure involved in the purchase of a new organ and, as soon became known, a concomitant totally new concept for the interior of the Church, precipitated heated, partisan discussions and trips to hear various types of organs—as well as to examine remodeled churches.

Eventually, the importunings of the current organist, Lawrence Jamison, prevailed and a 35-rank Cassavant Organ—the largest pipe organ in Rockland County—was ordered from St. Hyacinthe in Quebec. The other plans of the Rector and Vestry were also ratified: a gallery for the choir and organ were to be built over the main entrance, also providing an enclosed Narthex, with the organ case to be set in front of the Rose Window; throughout the Nave a new stone floor would be laid; and in the Chancel the memorial choir stalls, and the brass Communion Rail and Altar Gate were to be removed; wall-to-wall carpeting was to be installed, and a large communion table with suitable Jacobean frontals would be a free-standing Altar.

Meantime, innovations of a different sort were taking place. In addition to the three regular Sunday morning services and an occasional Evensong, a weekly morning Prayer Group followed by a Healing Service with the Laying-on-of-Hands was started. World issues and the burgeoning Civil Rights Movement were explored, studied, and de-

fined by Mr. Regas and his assistant, the Reverend John M. Haynes. They brought many Civil Rights and Evangelical leaders before the Parish and the open forums following the Services. Among them were Fathers Trevor Huddleston (later Bishop) of Johannesburg and Michael Brown of South-West Africa (later Namibia). Emily Gardiner Neal conducted a three-day Healing Mission. Later Mr. Regas was to describe the start of these activities in this way:

Coming to Grace Church from Pulaski, Tennessee—notorious for being the city in which the Ku Klux Klan was organized in 1865—I thought Nyack, New York, would see the racial question in a different light. Basically there was little difference. We were all caught up in the tragedy of racism in the '60's and it permeated every segment of society . . . .

The day after Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous speech, "I have a Dream," at the Lincoln Memorial in August 1963, James Reston wrote in the New York Times that whether "King's dream is fulfilled will be determined by what happens in churches and synagogues across America this weekend."

I shared this with the congregation and asked that we engage the issue of the Christian imperative for racial justice. The response was magnificent and we made our way through much pain and conflict to a corporate statement for Grace Church on racial justice. In 1963 that was an incredible witness and we did it together.

In 1967 Mr. Regas accepted a call to All Saints Church in Pasadena, California, and left Grace Church, entrusting the reconstruction of the church to the temporary guidance of his Curate, the Reverend Bruce Bowes.

A Priest-in-Charge, the Reverend Larry Larsen, with his wife, Astrid, arrived on May 7th, 1967, and for the eighth time a search committee for a Rector was formed.

## *THE REV. CHARLES ROBERT GREENE*

On October 1, 1967, the Reverend Charles Robert Greene first celebrated Holy Communion at Grace Church—in Memorial Hall. Due to the reconstruction, services continued in that temporary setting at an improvised altar consecrated by Canon Edward West. Mr. Greene's first priority was to complete the renovations, secure the funds for payment, and be back in the church by Christmas. All this was accomplished and Mr. Greene was instituted as eighth Rector of Grace Church on January 7th, 1968.

The new organ was installed in the choir gallery, light green carpeting covered the chancel. A large sun-burst wooden and gold cross adorned the reredos altar. A new oak communion rail was built. The Reverend Ernest Churchill was hired as Assistant, and the vestry agreed to spend a small endowment to help pay the bills for the renovations.

The Episcopal Churchwomen organized Grace's Thrift Shop in Nyack, a new and venturesome business which continues to bring in needed funds—part for diocesan programs and part for local charities. The shop is staffed by volunteers.

Charles Greene was born in Charlotte, North Carolina. After graduating from Wake Forest University, he received a degree of Master of Sacred Music and Master of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary, and a degree of Special Study from General Seminary, New York City. Ordained deacon and priest, he was assistant to the rector at

St. James the Less in Scarsdale, New York, and Rector of St. Bartholomew's Church in Pittsboro, North Carolina. He was Director of Programs for the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina until 1967.

With his wife Gloria, and two daughters, Claire and Melissa, Mr. Greene moved into the Rectory to begin his twelve years as priest of Grace Church.

Among his many interests were the Memorial Garden and Columbarium. The church property on First Avenue and Franklin Street was made into a large garden. Plantings of yew and holly and other ornamental shrubbery were gifts of the parishioners. The garden offered an ideal site for a Columbarium: to immure the cremated remains of parishioners, low stone walls were built of native stone to match the original Babbitt buildings. The limestone baptismal font was brought from the remodeled narthex into the garden, to signify the cycle of Christian death and rebirth, through baptism and burial. Appropriately now, the garden provides a place for fair-weather parish festivities . . . weddings, baptisms, picnics, receptions, and parties . . . as well as dignified burial.

Needlepoint communion kneelers and cushions became the next project. Mrs. Walter Hitesman of St. Matthew's Church, Bedford, New York, a talented needlepoint designer, presented Grace Church with the materials and painted canvasses, and most generously gave of her time to complete the work. The kneelers portray symbols of the seven sacraments entwined with grape leaves and vines, the motif found on the mosaic reredos. Later Mrs. Hitesman and Grace Church parishioners continued the needlepoint themes in kneelers and



reredos for the remodeled Bradley Memorial Chapel.

Several new agencies were started: Venture Inn, a home for retarded young people, was established in Nanuet and their desperate need was brought to the attention of the parish by a group of concerned Episcopalians. Early in his ministry at Grace Church Mr. Greene founded and became President of the Board of the Child Day-Care Center of the Nyacks. He also founded the Community Narcotics Counseling Service for drug abuse. The Diocese of New York was restructured, and "Inter-Parish Councils" were established for the collaboration of local parishes—in Rockland County our neighboring nine Episcopal parishes. The war in Vietnam was ever present, and the youth of the congregation were involved—those in the armed forces and conscientious objectors.

Mr. Greene obtained a Doctorate of Contemporary Theology at Drew University, Madison, New Jersey, in 1977. He was Chairman of the Ministries Commission, the Clergy Conferences, and the Committee on New Parishes for the Diocese of New York, and served on many boards in the City.

Mr. Greene was assisted during his twelve-year rectorship by the Reverends Ernest Churchill, Bruce Bowes, Orion Davis, John Lawrence, Anthony Hoeltzl, and Vincent Scotto. Under the Rector's direction, each priest offered his own pastoral, spiritual, educational and personal gifts of ministry to an increasingly diverse parish.

During Mr. Greene's tenure, the 1979 Book of Common Prayer was adopted by the national

Episcopal Church and was introduced at Grace. This change, distressing to many parishioners, provided opportunities for blending new theological emphases with old liturgical forms.

The music of Grace Church continued its excellence. The new organ attracted many accomplished organists, among them Larry Apgar, Cherry Rhodes, and Warren Swenson. Gloria Greene, a graduate of the Eastman School of Music and Union Theological Seminary, was often an organist at Grace Church and a supply organist for other parishes in the county.

Under Organist-Choirmaster John Gregory Bate, the music of Grace Church became known far beyond the village of Nyack. Mr. Bate, a graduate of Westminster Choir College, Princeton, New Jersey, joined the Grace Church staff in August 1972 and started the hand bell choirs for adults and youth. Support by an extensive group of parishioners and others through "The Friends of Music at Grace Church" enabled periodic concerts, Evensongs, recitals, and oratorios to be produced in a variety and quality unequalled in our region.

Besides being an accomplished musician himself, Mr. Greene had a strong sense of humor. This, an excellent singing voice and a flair for dramatics, kept the delighted parish constantly involved in producing satires, skits, comedies, and reviews. These were a high point of the parish social life and were financially rewarding.

Mr. Greene informed the parish in March of 1979 that he had accepted a call to become Dean of the Cathedral Church of St. James in Chicago. With regret but with blessings and pride, the vestry

accepted his resignation. He preached his last service in August, following a thorough toasting the night before in a surprise review entitled, "Chicago, Chicago!"

## PRIESTS AND PARISHIONERS, TOO

In addition to the full-time rectors and assistants who have given vitality and variety to the ordained ministry at Grace Church over the years, there has been another quiet ordained presence here. Sometimes called "multi-vocational clergy," sometimes "worker-priests," these dedicated parishioners have given graciously of their talents and training in many ways: concelebrating at the Eucharist, acting as Deacon, preaching, visiting, assisting committees and always sharing themselves freely.

The Reverend Doctor Kenneth Walker Mann was born in Nyack and so has been a lifelong member of the parish. He was graduated from Princeton University and from General Theological Seminary. Then, increasingly interested in the interrelationships between religion and mental health, Fr. Mann pursued his doctorate in Clinical Psychology at the University of Michigan and has since enjoyed a wide and varied experience in dioceses from coast to coast: Priest-Psychotherapist at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Chaplain and Clinical Psychologist at St. Luke's Hospital in New York, Chaplain and psychotherapist at the Hospital of the Good Samaritan in Los Angeles, and for seven years on the staff of All Saints Church in Beverly Hills. Drawn back to the East to assume a national secretariate for the Episcopal Church, he was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and served as a therapist at Silver Hill Foundation in New Canaan, Connecticut, until 1985. For

over forty-six years Dr. Mann has unstintingly served the needs of the Church and has especially delighted parishioners with his readings from the King James Bible at Christmas and Easter celebrations.

The Reverend Alan Laird Chisholm graduated from Amherst College in 1958, studied at Drew University, received his S. T. B. from General Theological Seminary in 1961, and served for a year as Curate at St. James, Los Angeles. In 1970, after serving parishes in Bronxville and South Salem, New York, Fr. Chisholm moved with his family to All Saints Church, Valley Cottage, to minister among the rapidly expanding population of North Clarkstown. Certified by the American Foundation for Religion and Psychology, the Peale Institute, and the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, in 1976 he resigned to pursue a professional career as a Pastoral Psychologist and Marriage Counselor. He now maintains an active practice in both New York City and Nyack, and is a stalwart member of the Grace Church Choir, the Worship and Long-Range Planning Commissions.

The Rev. Dr. Frederic Augustus Alling, Jr., graduate of Princeton in 1952 and General Seminary in 1955, is not only a priest but also a Clinical Psychiatrist, graduated from Columbia College of Medicine in 1961 and trained at the Medical Center Hospital in Albany, the Psychiatric Institute of New York City, and at Harlem Hospital. After years of assisting at Christ Church in West Englewood, New Jersey, Dr. Alling moved to Grandview and the Grace Church 8:00 congregation. Until the spring of 1986 Dr. Alling commuted daily to St. Luke's

Hospital in Morningside Heights and to his private practice downtown.

On Sunday, August 26th, 1979, Grace Church was the unsuspecting host to a gray-haired couple from Bedford, New York. The following Sunday that same couple returned—she to a pew, he to the pulpit. The Reverend Arthur Willis Hargate with his wife, Ruth, had come to Grace Church to be the “band-aid minister” for us, as he had been to many parishes since his retirement from St. Matthew’s Church, Bedford, New York. To quote Mr. Hargate: “My first and overwhelming impression was a great sense of caring for each other, of wonderfully warm, friendly and capable volunteers who were willing to do anything, who worked hard to keep the momentum going. My other lasting impression was the extraordinary high quality of the music. Happily, during my stay at Grace there were no calamities, no major crises!” For one year Mr. Hargate held us together, while the Search Committee worked.

## *THE REV. ROBERT ALLEN JEWETT*

In the Spring of 1980 the Reverend Robert Allen Jewett was called from Trinity Episcopal Church, Trumbull, Connecticut, where he was serving his fifteenth year. He is a 1960 graduate of Amherst College, holds a Masters Degree in American Studies from Fairfield University, and a Master of Sacred Theology from General Theological Seminary. While in Connecticut, Mr. Jewett taught Communications at the University of Bridgeport, served with the Department of Pastoral Education at Yale Divinity School, and gave leadership to many community-agencies and diocesan-boards.

Mr. Jewett, with his wife Judith and their three sons, Frank, Stephen, and Joshua, arrived in Nyack in August, 1980, and he was instituted as ninth Rector of Grace Church on October 12th, 1980.

In 1982 Mr. and Mrs. Jewett were legally separated and later divorced. On July 1st, 1984, Mr. Jewett married Ms. Gail Montgomery, an active choir member, and welcomed her son Shane McGarvey to their new home on Birchwood Avenue.

Some have described Fr. Jewett as "a Renaissance Man." He enjoys a broad range of interests, from carpentry and sailing to writing, classical language, music and dance. He believes that worship and spiritual life are nourished by a multi-dimensional appeal to the mind, the aesthetic sense, and the feelings of the worshipper. In an attempt to enhance the worship of as many people as possible,

diverse service forms, stories, and drama have been used, including the Rector's own writings and his premier 1983 production of the fifteenth-century Wakefield Mystery Plays. A series of historical services in 1986 provided insight into the meaning and development of our present liturgies. Different rites were used. Lenten services included symbolic washing of feet. Dance, wide varieties of musical tradition, drama, stories, and informal sermons have appeared as occasional parts of the worship experience.

During his tenure, Mr. Jewett has greatly increased lay leadership in worship, especially by women and young people. As part of their personal ministries parishioners are encouraged to share their expertise in enriching the parish and providing a varied program to involve all ages and groups in the parish family and community.

A year after the Rector's arrival in Nyack, a quiet Nebraskan-born graduate of Baylor University, University of Texas and General Theological Seminary joined the staff. The Reverend Rosalie Neal Richards, with a graduate-studies background in literary myth and folklore, brought to the Nyack community an intense concern for homeless and hurting people. In a continuing ministry in the Times Square area, the new Deacon reported to the Journal News, "Mostly what I've tried to do is just talk with the people, with the bag ladies. We all need human contact . . . There's a social worker side of me, I suppose, that wants to do what it can." Six months after her arrival at Grace, her new family and friends in the congregation and her old ones from seminary, college, and the City gathered with



the Rt. Rev. Paul Moore, heralded by the news headline: "Ordination makes church history." The first ordination of a priest in Nyack, and the first woman-priest in the parish, provided a deeply moving celebration of ministry and marked a new chapter in the life of Grace Church. A year and a half later, having touched many parishioners' lives with grace, the new priest moved to a new bi-lingual ministry at St. Ann's Church in the Bronx and thereafter became Priest-in-Charge of Church of the Ascension, New Haven, Connecticut.

In June of 1983 the Rev. Janet Vincent-Scaringe moved to Nyack with her husband Carl and began what has proven one of the longest and most enriching ministries of Grace Church's assistant-clergy. Sharing fully in parish leadership and worship, delighting and challenging many in her preaching, and providing persistent humor and insight in our parochial life, the Associate Rector has fostered a new interest in spiritual direction, retreats, and personal religious growth. These special gifts and skills have been recognized not only by many parishioners but also by her appointment to the staff of the Center for Christian Spirituality at General Seminary in the Fall of 1986. Further, her care in counselling, organization, and planning have strengthened the programs of the parish and the personal lives of many in Grace Church. A native of Yonkers and a graduate of Manhattanville College and General Seminary, this sometime professional photographer was ordained Priest at Grace Church by the Rt. Rev. Paul Moore, Bishop of New York, in an elegant and moving service remembered by many parishioners as the inspirational

highpoint of their parish experience.

Under the direction of Organist-Choirmaster John Gregory Bate, new and experimental music has been presented both in concerts and services. Just recently the Episcopal Hymnal 1982 was introduced, and over four hundred memorial copies were given by parishioners for use in all our Services. A new Cassavant Continuo Organ has added another dimension to the music program and to services in Bradley Memorial Chapel. Mr. Bate now conducts four choirs involving over a hundred people, and the Senior Choir of thirty sings on Sundays and continues its traditional choral Evensongs and artistic performances for the benefit of the parish and community.

To further lay responsibility for parish life, Mr. Jewett has instituted an educational supplement to the Grace Church MESSENGER, known as "GraceMission." He has expanded the commission-structure of the Vestry, developed parish by-laws, and involved parishioners and organizations in Parish Long-Range Planning processes. For six years he has led an annual Vestry Weekend for evaluation, planning, and congeniality, and recently he has worked with our leaders to implement the diocesan program of financial stewardship and tithing. Thus since his arrival in Nyack, Mr. Jewett has devoted himself to adapting programs and ministries to the ever-changing lifestyles in the parish, and the congregation increasingly reflects the diversity and exciting richness of our unique community.

Grace Church's tradition of service to the community continues through the work of the

Thrift Shop, the ECW, and occasional special collections to provide goods and funding for Day-Care Center of the Nyacks, Venture Inns, Rockland Family Shelter, Nyack Senior Center, General Theological Seminary minority scholarships, Rockland County Emergency Food Cupboard, the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief, United Thank Offering, and the Archbishopric of Jerusalem.

In recent years our facilities have been shared with the community for the work of Nyack High School, Impact Institute's programs of bi-lingual education and youth development, the "DWI Educational Program," and as the national headquarters for the Council for Religion in Independent Schools.

Each week we host six meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous and Alanon, Troop #2 of the Boy Scouts of America and pack-meetings of Brownies and Boy Scouts, four meetings of recovering "substance-abusers" and their families, as well as ongoing "Stop-Smoking" clinics and classes. On a monthly basis we provide meeting-space for Friends of the Nyacks, Bread for the World, Tappan Zee Playhouse Preservation Society, as well as occasional meetings of the Nyack Garden Club, Hopper House, the Volunteer Counseling Service, and diocesan events for Region II and our own Rockland Interparish Council.

In this Anniversary Year we will continue our tradition of serving special community-needs by opening our facilities for a new Toddler Day-Care Center, a regional office for the Diocesan Ministry with Persons with Disabilities, and the Family Re-

source Center for parents of pre-school children.

As Grace Church starts its one hundred and twenty-fifth year, there is continually widening opportunity for educational and spiritual growth by the staff, vestry, and congregation. Rich in blessings as we enter a new quarter-century with the slogan "Loving, Caring, and Sharing," Grace Church joyfully faces a promising future, while we "grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ."