



# The Grace Vine

January 2021

## Rector's Writ

Each January we face this almost automatic blend of looking back at the year that's passed and looking forward to a new year. It's hard not to look at 2020 with a shudder and a grimace. We may wonder what kind of shadow the pandemic will cast over 2021. Just how much longer will we have to endure these changes and uneasy disruptions of ordinary life? Will the vaccine(s) be effective...will they be available to anyone who wishes to get one?

We're told in Luke's gospel how the shepherds went to Bethlehem to see—face to face—this Savior whose birth the angels were celebrating. When they arrived, they let Mary and Joseph know what's happened and share the story of what *they were told about this baby...* and all were amazed. The shepherds went back to the fields, praising God. Yet what they had shared would not leave Mary. Their words were treasured and pondered in her heart.

A good devotional mentioned that 'ponder' meant "to thread together." That's the first time I've heard that definition, but it makes sense. There may be a part of us that tries to thread together what God wants us to learn from the year passed and how we might carry that into the year ahead: how we need faith, fellowship, and family (no matter how annoying they may be at times); how we need to care for and care about each other; how we **NEED GOD**, in all God's goodness, power, and mercy. Our need for God is especially apparent when we're confronted by situations we *can't control*.

Maybe we can 'thread together' something worth bringing into this new year. We may be feeling anxious, tired, frustrated. Yet in spite of that, we know the Lord Christ in whom we trust, believe, and follow will always be with us; behind us, before us, beside us, within us (hymn #370, words attributed to St. Patrick). With Jesus' presence, we can rely on a holy strength and wisdom to guide and lead us through the year ahead...to 'do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God.' (Micah 6:8)

Carol+





# Did You Know?...



As you all know our “in church” services have been suspended until further notice, as of December 6th. Bishop Hollingsworth and the Bishop of Southern Ohio determined worship services—as well as governing, formational, and fellowship meetings, etc.—would return to online/electronic means by December 13. Our rector and vestry had already determined to do this beginning December 6th, due to Portage County hitting the purple (high risk) category in the number of Covid cases. The decision was made in an effort to help keep church members as safe as possible...

But people in our parish are still keeping busy and doing their best to keep the Christmas spirit. There is still shopping to do, decorating, planning our Christmas dinner, and visiting with a few family members and friends (those we trust to keep safe—or not). We can all agree that this has been an interesting, up and down Christmas season. However we can still practice our faith and keep in mind and heart all that’s holy about Christmas. And speaking of “holy” did you know that the “Christmas Star” or the Star of Bethlehem will appear for the first time in nearly 800 years? This happened on December 21<sup>st</sup> and **Cathy Potisuk**, who shared this information, mentioned that it was also the birth date of her uncle **Bud Minnich**. This only takes place when Jupiter and Saturn align and the rings of Saturn form the radiant points of light. Something good can happen in 2020! ....

Well the Covid-19 vaccination will be available for most of us soon so maybe we can get back to normal sooner rather than later...

**Bette Brooks** was excited that **Caroline** and her family arrived back home in the States on Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> after three years in Austria. After their arrival in Charlotte, North Carolina they will have a 10 day quarantine, but her sister **Amanda** will have some goodies for them all when they get home...

**Carolyn Englert** reported that on Thanksgiving Day she was on zoom with 37 members of her family, including her children & grandchildren and her brothers and their children and grandchildren—all at the same time. Carolyn has been keeping busy baking and knitting. She made some beautiful knitted hats that were taken to the Center of Hope to be distributed to the children who come there with their families for food...

**Kay Canan** is enjoying weekends with her grandsons **Bryson & Luka**, and I’m sure daughter **Julie** is enjoying their time together, too. Mama does need a break...

**Pat Williams** has been busy making miniatures, and they are beautiful. (The flower shop is especially nice!) She’s made so many she’s finding it hard to find a place

to display them, and she’s offering some for sale. It’s something she enjoys doing and she’s so good at it...

**Tim and Yuka Lewicki** have been very busy too; on Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> they were blessed with a baby girl. Her name is **Mitsuki**, she weighed 7 lbs, 7ozs., and all reports are that she’s beautiful!...

**Mary and Hank Cabot** still don’t know if or when their trip to Florida is going to happen. **Shirley and Mike Johnson** won’t be spending Christmas and New Year’s in California with daughter, **Susan Kay** and her family, the first time in 15 years. Their granddaughter, **Elizabeth** was only nine when they started the California tradition; Christmas with family time (and sunny weather) and the Rose Bowl Parade, too!...

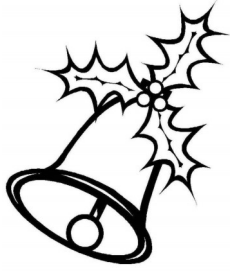
**Martha & Jeff Croll** have been working very hard to get her mother Martha’s affairs in order after her passing last month, but they can see light at the end of the tunnel...

**Fred and Nancy Lundgren** have been staying close to home, as we all have. Nancy says Christmas will be spent with their daughter **Lisa and granddaughters Paige and Taylor**. However, Taylor is on the Stow police department, and she will be working a double shift on Christmas! That happens when you’re the new person in the department, but it won’t always be that way...

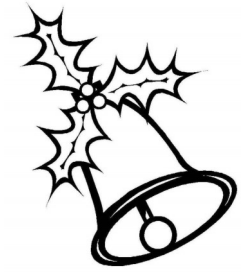
**Rick Lashley** had a small family Christmas gathering with his mother, **Irene**, sister, **Kathy** and her husband, **Craig**. His mom had to leave the nursing home for an appointment, then be quarantined two weeks when she returns. The thought was she might as well have some fun while she’s out, so they planned on some good food, Christmas gifts for her to open, and just sharing some brief time as a family (while playing it safe with masks and social distancing of course)...

**Tim and Marcia Splinter** are enjoying having their sons **Eric & Kevin** home from college. Tim and Marcia, as well as **Jeff and Martha Croll** recorded an anthem each couple sang for our Christmas Eve service. It was a team effort, with our organist **Tim Lewicki** and his wife **Yuka** playing organ and keyboard for the recordings. Also, Martha and Tim Lewicki recorded music for Silent Night, Holy Night, Tim playing the organ and Martha playing the guitar. As usual, we’ll have enjoyed some lovely music and singing on Christmas Eve. **Doug Holzschuh** is overseeing the entire recording of our Christmas Eve service, and he’s put a lot of time and effort into making it special and memorable...

On December 26<sup>th</sup> **Kay and Ralph Wise** will be attending their son **Cary’s** wedding. He and his bride **Andrea** will marry at St. Charles Borromeo church in Parma. Our congratulations and best wishes to Cary and Andrea!



# Christmas Letter



from Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry

## *Joy to the world!*

While we may not feel joyful this year – as the pandemic of disease continues to bring sickness and death, when fear and mistrust – a darkness – threatens to overcome the light – we, as followers of Jesus Christ must bear joy to this aching world. We must shine light into the darkness. *Joy to the world!*

Like much in our lives, proclaiming joy is difficult work – also *good* and *essential* work – especially now. Though we mourn that which is lost in our lives, our families, and our communities – *Joy to the world!*

While we strive to pull up the twisted and thorny vines of hatred and bigotry and anger – *Joy to the world!*

Through streaming tears and gritted teeth – *Joy to the world!* – because God is breaking into our lives and into this world anew.

While this is a strange year, the ministry He gives us remains the same. We will prepare him room in our hearts by taking on the ministry Jesus demands of us: feed those who are hungry; welcome the stranger; clothe those who are naked; heal those who are sick; visit the prisoner. Love God. Love your neighbor. Sing joy into this old world. Prepare him room.

St. Luke writes of the first Christmas, “(Mary) gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” There, in the simplest bed, in the cool of the night, in a trough, in bands of cloth, lies the One for whom no room was made. And yet strangely, there lies the One whom not even the universe can contain.

*Joy to the world! The Lord is come.* In our hearts, in your homes, in our lives, prepare him room.

God love you; God bless you; and may God hold us all in those almighty hands of love.

**The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry**  
**Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church**



## **Birthdays**

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4th	Emily Summy
10th	Pat Williams
15th	Bruce Ahrens
26th	Courtney Rich
28th	Paige Paxton
30th	Bud Hughes

# Congratulations!

*and many happy returns...*

## **Baptisms**

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9th	Bill Summy
18th	Maggie Rich



## **Anniversaries**

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11th	Fred & Nancy Lundgren
21st	Leslie & Larry Thomas
28th	Mike & Shirley Johnson

# The Bulletin Board



## CHANGE IN CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

For those who may not know, Grace Church office hours have changed. The office is open **10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday.**

With all that's going on, please know that the diocese has a way to continue giving directly to the parishes online (with no fees or other deductions) if you're not coming in person.

[dohio.org/designate-a-gift-to-your-parish](http://dohio.org/designate-a-gift-to-your-parish)

If you have questions, contact Marcia Splinter  
[marcia@splinterfactions.net](mailto:marcia@splinterfactions.net)

## Bible Study

Missing Bible Study? Come join us every Sunday at 4:00 p.m. for a study on the lectionary readings for that day. Just let Carolyn Englert know and she can sign you up. We meet using Zoom, a very easy app to learn to use, on your computer or tablet. Her phone is 330.527.4888 and she will walk you through it.

## A Christmas Poem

from Bishop of Ohio Mark Hollingsworth, Jr.

Holy light,  
Shining from before time and beyond place,  
focused like the sun's rays through a magnifying glass  
on the lowly stable of divine birth,  
there ignites in humankind  
the perfect love of God.

In the softly beating heart  
of the humble and sacrificial Savior,  
begins to burn a flame of justice and peace,  
safeguarded by the humility and sacrifice  
of generations through whom will shine its  
holy light.

*This poem concluded our Bishop's Christmas message of December 21, 2020, found in its entirety at [www.dohio.org](http://www.dohio.org). Even though you may be viewing the above letter and poem after Christmas, they're worth reading.*

# Annual Parish Meeting & Reports

Given the ongoing risks of larger (more than 5 people) gatherings, the vestry and rector are exploring options for our Annual Parish Meeting. We may postpone the meeting until a time when we can gather in person. We may also publish/send the reports, review and approve the 2021 budget, and elect vestry members all via e-mail, since several members don't have computer access for a zoom meeting. The e-mail method would allow for comments and/or questions to be submitted in response to the reports and would include information generally found in the Annual Meeting booklet. (It's a bit more difficult to do the covered dish lunch and fellowship online!) We ask those listed below to **submit reports to Marsha Snyder at the office before January 17th** (by e-mail or hand written & Marsha will type).

## The following people are responsible for reports:

**Rector's Report**- Rev. Carol Evans

**Senior Warden's Report** – Midge Myers

**Junior Warden's Report** – Fred Lundgren

**Treasurer's Report** – Marcia Splinter

**Altar Guild** – Nancy Lundgren

**Altar Guild Financial** – Marsha Snyder

**Acolytes** – Tim Splinter

**Christian Education** – Sue Ahrens/Courtney Rich

**Adult Christian Ed** – Carolyn Englert

**Memorial Garden Fund** – Marsha Snyder

**Choir** – Martha Croll

**Gracie's Back Door** – Nancy Lundgren/Sally Dier

**Prayer Chain** – Carolyn Englert

**Discretionary Fund** – Marsha Snyder

**Hospitality Committee** – Nancy Ervin

**Card Ministry** – Shirley Johnson

**Visibility Committee** – Sally Dier/Kay Canan

**Fund Raising Committee** – Cherry Monegan

## Thank You! Thank You!

Our thanks and appreciation to all those who serve and help out at Grace Church in so many ways, including:

- Doug Holzschuh for videotaping, edits, uploads, and creative ideas for our Christmas Eve service (Sunday worship, too)
- Organist Tim Lewicki & his wife Yuka for playing for recordings; for wonderful prelude & postlude pieces and Christmas hymns to guide our singing from home...and all of this with a brand new baby daughter at home!
- Martha & Jeff Croll and Marcia & Tim Splinter for recording anthems for Christmas Eve
- Nancy Lundgren and Cathy Potisuk for their work and efforts decorating the church and setting the altar for Christmas Eve
- John McDonald for fixing the heat, this time in the office area (and Christmas week to boot)
- Marcia Splinter for the work she puts in to being a great treasurer, especially this year.
- Vestry members for serving in 2020...what a year!
- Tim Splinter for excellent design work, graphics, and layout of the Grace Vine each month, and e-mailing to our members
- Grace members who've given generously all year and those who've made special year-end contributions

# *Fathers (and Mothers) and Friends*

By Bette Brooks

*They lived not only in ages past; there are hundreds of thousands still.  
The world is bright with the joyous saints who love to do Jesus' will.*

**Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225—January 28, 1274)**

**January 28**

Thomas Aquinas was born in his father's castle in southern Italy, the son of the most powerful branch of the family. Both his parents came from wealth and his childhood was one of ease and luxury for the 13<sup>th</sup> century. His uncle was abbot of Monte Cassino, the oldest Benedictine monastery, and his family expected young Thomas to follow his uncle into the order as was suitable for a younger son. At the age of 5, Thomas was sent to Monte Cassino to begin his education; however, wars in the area convinced his parents to move him to a new school in Naples. There he came under the influence of a Dominican preacher who was actively seeking to recruit devout believers to join the Dominican order.

When Thomas was 19, he resolved to join the recently founded Dominicans, to the distress and disappointment of his family. His mother Theodora had him kidnapped during an attempt by the Dominicans to move him from Rome to Paris to escape her interference. During the year he was held under guard in his family's castle, Thomas taught his sisters and remained in communication with the Dominicans. Seeing that he would not change his mind, Theodora engineered his escape at night believing that an escape would salvage the family's dignity.

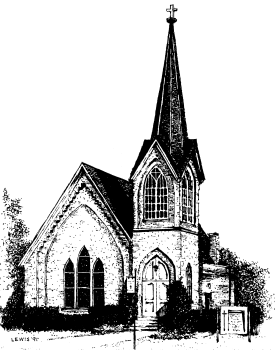
Thomas began his advanced studies in 1245 at the University of Paris; then he taught at the University of Cologne and later returned to Paris to teach. Between the years 1259 and 1268, he taught at the seminaries in Naples and Orvieto before being named Papal Theologian and moving to Rome. In 1268, he was named head of the seminary in Paris but his tenure there was contentious, so when the Dominicans invited him to create a seminary anywhere and staff it as he wished, he returned to Naples. The remaining years of his life were spent there, teaching and writing, until his death January 28, 1274.

In the thirteenth century, when Thomas Aquinas lived, the works of Aristotle, largely forgotten in Western Europe, began to be available again, partly from Eastern European sources and partly from Moslem Arab sources in Africa and Spain. These works offered a new and exciting way of looking at the world. Many enthusiastic students of Aristotle adopted him quite frankly as an alternative to Christianity. Others denounced Aristotle as an enemy of the Christian Faith. A third approach was that of those who tried to hold both Christian and Aristotelian views side by side with no attempt to reconcile the two. Aquinas had a fourth approach. While remaining a Christian, he immersed himself in the ideas of Aristotle, and then undertook to explain Christian ideas and beliefs in language that would make sense to disciples of Aristotle. At the time, this seemed to be a very dangerous and radical idea, and Aquinas spent much of his life living on the edge of ecclesiastical approval. His success can be measured by the prevalence today of the notion that, of course all Christian scholars in the Middle Ages were followers of Aristotle.

Aristotle is no longer the latest intellectual fashion, but Aquinas's insistence that the Christian scholar must be prepared to meet other scholars on their own ground, to become familiar with their viewpoints, to argue from their premises, has been a permanent and valuable contribution to Christian thought.

## **PRAYER (contemporary wording)**

Almighty God, you have enriched your Church with the singular Learning and holiness of your servant Thomas Aquinas: Enlighten us more and more, we pray, by the disciplined thinking and teaching of Christian scholars, and deepen our devotion by the example of saintly lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



## The Grace Vine

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Grace Episcopal Church of Ravenna

The Rev. Carol Evans—Rector  
The Rev. William Snyder  
Marsha Snyder—Secretary  
Tim Lewicki—Organist  
Martha Croll—Choirmaster

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The Vestry of Grace Episcopal Church  
Midge Meyers(2020)  
Fred Lundgren(2020)  
Barb Popiel(2020)  
Phillip Crouse(2021)  
Phillip Rich(2022)  
Amir Amruzzaman(2022)  
Cathy Pottisuk(2022)

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