



GRACE
EPISCOPAL
CHURCH

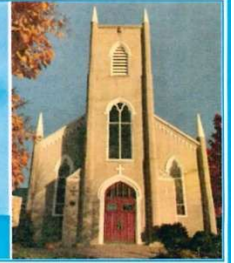
Mount Clemens, Michigan

Amazing Grace

WHERE ALL ARE WELCOME

Monthly newsletter of the people and ministries of Grace Episcopal Church

December 2025



O Little Town of Bethlehem, Surrounded By a Wall



On Stewardship Sunday I announced that we would be going to Martha T. Berry Care Facility to sing Christmas carols on Saturday, December 13th. Since then, I have been humming various Christmas songs, and I found myself stuck on "O Little Town Of Bethlehem." I started thinking about the ongoing

war between Israel and the Palestinians in Gaza and remembered my pilgrimage with our diocese to the Holy Land in November 2016. One of our stops was in Bethlehem which is in the West Bank about six miles away from Jerusalem. We will be focusing on Bethlehem at our Christmas Eve services, and I have the impression that most of us think about this tiny village as a peaceful, tranquil place because Jesus was born there. The reality, however, is that Bethlehem is an occupied city with a huge wall separating the Palestinians from the Jewish settlements around it. It was also occupied by the Romans back at the time of Jesus.

So, in my article this month I wanted to paint a picture of what the current reality is in this city. I took all the pictures that you will see here. The Church of the Nativity is the oldest Christian church in the Holy Land, built in 326 by the Roman emperor Constantine and his mother Helena on the site that is believed to cover the actual grotto where Jesus was born. The church had major renovations and expansions done over the centuries and is a very large structure today. In 1852, the Roman Catholic, Armenian, and Greek Orthodox Churches were given custody over the church. The Greeks are responsible for the Grotto of the Nativity, which marks the traditional site of the birth of Jesus. You must go down a flight of stairs into a small room where a large fourteen-pointed silver star encased in white marble marks the believed site where Jesus was born. We participated in a Mass there presided over by a Roman Catholic priest.

About one mile away from the Church of the Nativity you will walk by a large wall or separation barrier that was built by Israel in the early 2000s. This structure is made of concrete and electronic fences and barbed wire that is 30 feet high and has intermittent sentry posts for soldiers. The wall almost surrounds Bethlehem, separating the town from Jerusalem and cutting off residents from their families, friends, and farms, which hurts the local economy. The Israelis say the wall is necessary for their protection, whereas the Palestinians and many other countries see it as a means of control and

Worship Opportunities

Sundays at 8:30 and 10:30 AM

**TO JOIN SERVICES LIVE ONLINE
VIA ZOOM, VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND
FOLLOW THE LINKS**

www.gracechurchmtclemens.org

**TO JOIN SERVICES LIVE BY
PHONE VIA ZOOM:**

8:30 Service: Call 312-626-6799

Meeting ID: 881 8016 9300

Password: 246040

10:30 Service: See YouTube link
on Website

SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY

9:30 AM in Guild Room

*Worship resources are available
on our Website 24/7/365.*



subjugation that violates international law. This separation wall in Bethlehem is part of the larger wall that Israel built around and throughout the entire West Bank, and it runs for a total length of 440 miles.

Our pilgrimage group stayed in the West Bank on the Palestinian side of Jerusalem at the Anglican College of St. George. We had a Christian Palestinian tour guide and a Muslim Palestinian bus driver. We could go anywhere in the West Bank, but whenever we crossed a gate through the barrier wall into Israel proper or another section of the West Bank, Israeli soldiers would board the bus for an inspection with their weapons at the ready. We were a busload of foreign tourists so we could do this, whereas many, many Palestinians are not allowed to cross between sections of the West Bank or into Israel proper. Israel also controls the electricity in the West Bank and can cut it off anytime they choose to do so.

The tension was high back in 2016 with all the Jewish settlers homesteading in the Palestinian West Bank, but I can only imagine the tension and violence that is taking place currently, not only in Gaza but in the West Bank as well.

So, when we celebrate the feast of the Nativity (the birth of Jesus) on Christmas Eve and we sing “O Little Town of Bethlehem,” let us keep in mind that there is ongoing conflict, fear, violence, oppression, and death in and around this town, both in 2025 and on the night that Jesus was born. Let us pray for an end to this and for a peaceful settlement that is just and equitable for all people in that troubled land.

Blessings,

Pastor Steve







Joyful Seasons Greetings, Grace Friends!

There are three opportunities this December for you to contribute and utilize your time, talent, and treasure towards a few ministries I'm helping out with!

First, please consider joining choir rehearsals **Wednesdays** at **6:30 PM** as we prepare our Advent and Christmas Eve 9 PM service musical selections.



Next, we would love to see you at Martha T. Berry Nursing Facility in Mt. Clemens on **Saturday, December 13** at **10 AM**, where we will pray and carol with the residents starting at **10:30**.

Lastly, clothing and food donations and a few volunteers are needed for our Christmas Warming Day, where the church will be open to guests for respite and healing on **Christmas Day** from **11-4**. I would love to serve chili and have a baked potato bar along with fun tabletop activities available while Christmas DVDs are played (these are also appreciated).

A special bunch of poinsettias to all those who have served musically at this church. Whether you have sung in the choir, the pew, in your heart, or played an instrument, thank you for adding your gift of sound to this loving body of Christ. I look forward to this next year of music and fellowship together.

Merry Christmas and happy 2026 to you all!

Josh Dulin, Minister of Music

Highlights from the November 20 Vestry Meeting

The Vestry met Thursday, November 20. While the minutes will also be posted, here's a summary of the meeting:

The fire marshal came out for an inspection. Initially he came to review the rectory in advance of leasing the property, but predictably he wandered into the church building to expand the inspection. A good deal of the improvements regard emergency lighting and doors and door handles. A local door contractor and a local electrician are making these improvements, as they are both familiar with the applicable codes. The remainder of the repairs consist of ceiling tiles in the basement, patching some holes, and covering under the steps that go down to the basement. We have a handle on most of these, but still need to figure out how to mount the plywood under the steps.

We reviewed the 2026 preliminary budget, which of course cannot be finalized until all pledges are submitted.

We voted to submit a bylaw change for the parish to vote on which would allow us to reduce the number of Vestry members to 7, from 9. We will vote on this at the January annual meeting.

We reviewed the B&G report of items completed and work to be done.

The Cookie Walk will be on Sunday, December 14. American Lutheran Church will be worshipping with us that day.

We finalized plans for our participation in the Mt. Clemens Santa Parade.

We will be participating in helping with the Macomb County Winter Shelter from January 8-11. The shelter is located near Van Dyke and Stephens (9½ Mile). Sign-up sheets will be available soon. Positions to fill include registration/intake, bag check, food prep and service for dinner and grab-n-go bags for the following day's lunch, and light evening cleaning (no restrooms).

We made some headway with the local Chronicle newspaper regarding submitting ads for future events and talked about the Facebook page.

That's it in a nutshell!



Monthly Bible Study

Every December and June we take a break from our Bible study to learn a prayer technique. This month we'll talk about novenas. Come join us in learning a new way to talk with God. We meet on **December 12 at 6:30 PM.**



*Remembering **Frances-Joseph Gaudet**, whose feast day is **December 30**:*

Frances was born in a log cabin in Holmesville, Mississippi, in 1861, of African American and Native American descent. Raised by her grandparents, she later went to live with a brother in New Orleans, where she finished school and attended Straight College.

While she was still a young woman, Gaudet dedicated her life to prison reform. In 1894, she began holding prayer meetings for Black prisoners. She wrote letters for them, delivered messages, and found them clothing. Later, she extended this ministry to white prisoners as well. Her dedication to the imprisoned and to penal reform won her the respect of prison officials, city authorities, the governor of Louisiana, and the Prison Reform Association.

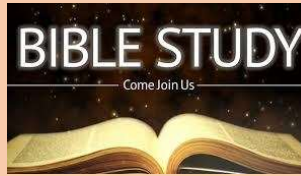
In 1900, she was a delegate to the international convention of the Women's Christian Temperance Union in Edinburgh, Scotland. Gaudet worked to rehabilitate young Black people arrested for misdemeanors or vagrancy, becoming the first woman to support young offenders in Louisiana. Her efforts helped to found the Juvenile Court.

Deeply committed to the provision of good education, she eventually purchased a farm and founded the Gaudet Normal and Industrial School. In time, it expanded to more than 105 acres, with numerous buildings, and also served as a boarding school for children with working mothers. Gaudet served as its principal until 1921, when she donated the institution to the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana. Though it closed in 1950, the Gaudet Episcopal Home opened in the same location four years later to serve African American children aged four to sixteen.

Merciful God, who raised up your servant Frances Joseph-Gaudet to be a champion of the oppressed: Grant that we, encouraged by her example, may advocate for all who are denied the fullness of life to which you have called all your children; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

December Birthdays

Deborah Chapman	12/02
Linda Satterly	12/10
Donna Oakley	12/16
Beckie Murphy	12/19
Brooke Steel-Lau	12/21
Kirsten Blackburn	12/25
Fredrick Chapman	12/25



Join us in the Guild Room for Bible study, every **Sunday at 9:30 AM.**



"F" Dollars for Fueling Kids' Futures

If your wallet has any dollar bills with **F** on them, please pass them along to help us fill backpacks with weekend food for hungry Mt. Clemens students.

Book Club at Grace

The next book club meeting will be **January 8, 2026 at 6 PM** at Grace Church. The book we will discuss is *America's First Daughter* by Stephanie Dray and Laura Kamoie. This is a book focused on Patsy Jefferson and how she shaped the legacy of a new nation with her father, Thomas Jefferson. Please join us in January for a lively and interesting discussion. Call Ann Strevel if you need any further information.



COMMUNITY SUPPERS

Wednesdays at 4 PM

Sundays (Nov.-Mar.) at 4 PM

GRACE FOOD PANTRY

Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 10 AM to 12 PM
Curbside distribution

A Prayer for the Winter Solstice

God of all creation,
of bare forest and low northern skies,
of paths unknown and never to be taken,
of bramble, sparrow, and damp, dark
earth.

We thank you for loss, for the breaking of
the dimming year,
We thank you for light, even in its seeming
midwinter failing,
We thank you for life, for its hope and
resistance,
Like a seed dying and living.

—Rachel Mann



Recommended Food Pantry Donations

Canned soups, canned fruits and vegetables, macaroni and cheese, peanut butter, jelly, canned tuna/chicken, SpaghettiOs, Hamburger Helper, instant mashed potatoes, spaghetti sauce, pasta, cereal, canned applesauce

Grace Episcopal Church Staff

Pastor Steven Steinberger-Domienik

Cell: 203-641-2068

Email: pastor@gracechurchmtclemens.org

Music Director: Josh Dulin

Clergy Emerita: The Rev. Deacon Betty Brogan

2025 Vestry

Martha Houser

Mike Oakley

Don Siefkes

Ernie Simon

Lucy Smith

Bill Siewert

Dash Heath

Mike Zubas

Sharon Potter

Beaumont Hospice



Become a Hospice Volunteer



Brighten someone's day with your presence! Hospice volunteers play a vital role by visiting patients and providing support to caregivers through listening, conversation, and companionship. This is a long-term commitment. Join us in making a meaningful difference during one of life's most significant journeys.

**Macomb, Oakland and
Wayne Counties**



248-743-9400



Ask for Leandra - Volunteer Coordinator