

ANNUAL REPORT

**Old South Church in Boston**





### Easter 2021 Crane Installation

Under the leadership of Old South member Ralph Watson a beautiful installation of 2500+ paper cranes was hung in the Portico, honoring the memory of those who have died from COVID. More than 200 people from 13 states participated. The installation hung for several weeks and was visited by hundreds of people.



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## Credits

*Cover design by Jamie Garuti. Layout and editing by Helen McCrady. Proofreading by Lois Corman and John Barbour. Photography by George Delianides, Jamie Garuti, Brian Fluharty, Helen McCrady, Summer Marsh, Nancy Taylor and Wiss Janney Elstner Associates. Lovingly written by a host of angels.*



# Minutes of the 351<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the Members of Old South Church in Boston March 7, 2021

## Separate Accompanying Documents

- Agenda/Program
- 2020 Annual Report

## Call to Order and Opening Prayer

Phil Stern, Old South Moderator, called the session to order, his first Annual Meeting and also the first virtual Annual Meeting in Old South's history. He led the group in prayer:

We rededicate ourselves to doing justice, loving mercy and walking with you into the future to which you are ever calling us. Fill our hearts with your Spirit; give us courage to do that which we fear is undoable; restore in us a new fervor to love one another. Make us stout for the work before us.

Separately, Larry Bowers determined the presence of a quorum.

## Acceptance of the Minutes of the 350<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

Clerk Robert Gabler accepted a motion to approve the minutes of the 350th Annual Meeting. The Motion was seconded and the minutes were Approved by the membership.

## Receipt and Acceptance of the 2020 Annual Report

Phil formally acknowledged the 2020 Annual Report, over 100 pages. Upon Motion the membership Approved its acceptance into the records.

## Leadership Report and Election

Mary Ann Lape, Leadership Committee Chair, presented a brief overview of her submitted report and introduced the slate of nominees advanced by the Leadership Committee. Her motion for the election of the candidates as slated was recorded. With no further nominations from the floor, Phil called the motion which was seconded and, upon full vote by the membership, the Motion Carried. As such, the following were elected: Phil Stern, Moderator; Bill Bulkeley, Treasurer; Rob Gabler, Clerk; Kate Silfen, Historian; George Delianides, Deacon; Jur Jurma, Deacon; Susan Navia, Deacon; Tom Ralston, Deacon; Tony Rich, Deacon; Maren Batalden, Councilor at Large; Chris Roughton, Councilor at Large; Priscilla Geigis, Trustee; Paula Hammond, Trustee; Caitlin Callahan, Christian Service & Outreach Chair; David Becker, Leadership Chair; Cathryn Griffith, Planned Giving Chair; Katie Maliel, Leadership Committee.

## Act of Memorial

The following souls, known and loved, departed since the 2019 Annual Meeting, and were remembered for their lives well lived as everyone was encouraged to sing along with "For All the Saints":

*Russell A. Nile*

*Walter J. Hunziker*

*Elaine A. Hooper*

*Lewis "Alex" Morrow*

*S. Sue Horner*

*Michael Salo*

*Elaine C. Huber*

*Brent Cameron Wegner*

## Report of the Trustees

Board of Trustees Chair Randy Billings summarized his written report and highlighted the past year with pictorials. The endowment is solid, increasing by proceeds from the Capital Campaign as well as gifts from the estate of Eleanor Jenson, the Estate of Alphonse Lucas and the Elder Family Foundation. Despite a year of great economic unrest caused by the

COVID-19 pandemic, the endowment increased by over 11%. Randy outlined some changes to the assets strategy, namely safely exiting from some funds and entering into more socially responsible and environmentally friendly investments. In terms of racial awareness and reckoning, Randy stressed that the Trustees are working with the Leadership Committee to ensure all groups, including its own, reflect diversity and equity. He commended Helen McCrady, Senior Church Administrator; John Braught, Director of Operations; and Linda Van Praet, Accounting and Human Resource Administrator; for their indispensable assistance.

## **Report of the Treasurer**

Treasurer Bill Bulkeley outlined his written report by reviewing the year which, financially speaking, could have been harrowing. Instead “Old South ended 2020 with its finances strong.” Congregational members met or exceeded their pledges, and online donations topped expected collection plate offerings. The government Paycheck Protection Program loan is anticipated to be forgiven, giving Old South a “boost of confidence” to continue as we had hoped. Because of a substantial rainy day fund, aided by the PPP loan, we can maintain full staffing, even if that means a significant budget deficit. “Overall, Old South’s finances are probably as strong as they have ever been.” For their unique contributions Bill recognized Trustees Chair Randy Billings, and Nancy Taylor, “a senior minister who knows almost as much about the church books as she does about The Good Book.”

A question from the floor concerned the Preschool which has “struggled mightily” during the pandemic. There is a plan going forward to continue the Preschool with tightly controlled expenses. As the pandemic continues to shift thinking and planning, much remains to be seen as time unfolds but all are optimistic for its continuation in some form.

## **Farewell to Outgoing Leaders and Installation of Incoming Leaders**

With the installation of incoming Leaders, Nancy also formally bid farewell and offered deep gratitude to the outstanding departing leaders whose time and talent have contributed to Old South’s success over the past year: Rick Kraft, outgoing Chair of Planned Giving; Rubén Bonilla-Santiago, outgoing Senior Deacon; Randy Billings, outgoing Chair of the Board of Trustees; Marie Hurd, outgoing Chair of the Christian Service & Outreach Committee; and Mary Ann Lape, outgoing Chair of the Leadership Committee.

Others also deserve special mention this year. Nancy recognized Carolyn Davis, Director of the Old South Preschool for 42 years; (G)RACE Speaks, the committee charged with promoting sacred conversations about race to help us determine how best to address the scourge of white privilege, white supremacy, and structural racism; and Willie Sordillo, composer, musician and musical leader of Jazz Worship since its inception.

## **Video Montage**

Life amid the pandemic at Old South and beyond was presented through a moving video montage, assembled by Acting Associate Minister Shawn Fiedler. Images of the year through Zoom, learned by so many so fast, were a testament to Old South’s resilience and endurance during a tumultuous period of uncertainty.

## **Adjournment and Benediction**

Determining no further business, Phil asked Nancy for a benediction after which the 351<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting was adjourned.

The next Annual Meeting will be held March 6, 2022.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Robert Gabler**

Clerk

# The Final Report of the 20th Senior Minister



Since announcing my retirement in November of 2021 (to take effect at the end of May 2022), I have been keenly aware of each succeeding “final” with Old South Church (for instance, my final Meeting House Sunday, my final Christmas Eve, my final Epiphany). This constitutes my final Annual Report. And so it is that this year’s report is in the form of a time-line. The time-line covers the period between January of 2005, when I took up this position, and today.

These seventeen plus years have been truly eventful. Many of the events and programs were creative and of our doing: launching new services, blessing Marathon athletes, hosting Deval Patrick’s service of thanksgiving on his inauguration as Governor, selling the most expensive book in the world and coming to terms with the outsized needs of our building, claiming our role as a Teaching Church of the United Church of Christ, addressing a national and Christian reckoning on racism, partnering

with City Mission in the Urban Pastoral Ministry Program. However, other events were beyond our control and forced us to respond: for instance, when the MBTA heaved our East façade causing a through-and-through crack from below ground to the roof, two bombs detonated at the finish line of the Boston Marathon, addressing Islamophobia, turning 350 years old, or navigating a world-wide pandemic of biblical proportions.

With each unfolding crisis and opportunity our faith has been tested, our creativity stimulated, our purpose made yet clearer. At the end of the day Old South Church is here, is ministering, with a single, compelling resolve: to serve as bearers of and witnesses to the Gospel. Such is our purpose. Though we are knee deep in a world full of woe, it is given to us to announce and lean into a realm of peace with justice, where “they do not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain,” where “justice flows down like rivers, and righteousness like a mighty stream,” where “God will wipe away every tear from our eyes, and death will be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor pain.” Until these come to pass, we have work to do. And the “we” to which I refer is the institution: Old South Church in Boston. It is greater than the sum of its parts. At three-hundred-and-fifty-two years old, barnacled, weather worn, and storm tossed, its mission is the reason for its beat-the-odds survivability. It is why I have given so much attention to the “institution” of Old South: to the infrastructure (finances, personnel, leadership). These are the necessary, if prosaic, means to our holy end; the infrastructure facilitates the mission.

Any such time-line is a subjective undertaking. It will inevitably leave out some events or people which another writer might have included. I take comfort in the fact that our annual reports are fulsome and whatever may be missing here, is surely to be found elsewhere.

It has been the honor of my life to work side by side with you, Old South Church personnel and lay leaders. You have been the best of companions – the best allies and accomplices anyone could hope for in this high, holy, and unfinished undertaking. We have done meaningful work together. Moreover, we’ve had a ton of fun along the way. Thank you.

## 2005 | Moderator: Russ Gregg

A whopping **twenty-four staff transitions** occur. These include the onboarding of Quinn Caldwell as Associate Minister, Helen McCrady as Senior Church Administrator, Elias Perez as Senior Sexton, Nancy Taylor as Senior Minister.

**Jazz Worship**, featuring the Willie Sordillo Ensemble, is launched as a ministry to the unchurched and a laboratory of worship (Thursdays at 6 p.m.). **First Worship** is launched offering weekly communion and worship at a convenient hour for young families (Sundays at 9 a.m.). Held in our stone chapel, both services are in the round and interactive, subverting an old Gothic space, and infusing it with a new vibe.

Old South Church holds the first annual **Blessing of the Boston Marathon Athletes** on the day preceding the Marathon.

We add **“T” to LGB** with our first openly transgender member (Joanne Herman) and relevant educational programming.



## 2006 | Moderator: Jeff Makholm

*In Memoriam*  
*PETER SOUTHWELL-SANDER*  
*(December 2, 1941 – June 7, 2006)*

The **Tower Bell Wheel** is built, installed, and dedicated to my late husband's memory. Across the years the Bell, our outdoor voice, is pealed in celebration or tolled in mourning to mark global, national, or local occasions.

Our annual **Blue Christmas Jazz Worship Service** is established, acknowledging the difficulty of this season for many.

We launch a **Congregational Discernment Visioning Process**. It percolates along, until in 2010, it is adopted as the Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

We begin **web-casting** sermons.

We claim the vocation of being a **Teaching Church** of the United Church of Christ and focus on forming gifted young leaders. In succession, three of our associate ministers (Quinn Caldwell, John Edgerton, and Shawn Fielder) are tasked with identifying, recruiting, and mentoring exceptional seminarians and sending them out into the world equipped and able to lead in their own right.

## 2007 | Moderator: Jeff Makholm

Introduced the position of **Theologian in Residence**.

Our gardens win the Mayor's **Golden Trowel Award** (under the green thumbs of Marc & Diane Gaucher, and Jim Hood).

**Desmond Tutu** speaks at the church on Palestinian rights angering some in Boston's Jewish community.

## 2008 | Moderator: Wayne Davis

**Theft of Rare Books**. This occurred from the case in the Samuel Johnson Room (nine pamphlets and five volumes). Only one volume is recovered; it had been purchased by a rare book dealer and sold for \$50,000, but is recalled.

**Harry Lyn Huff** begins as our Minister of Music.

An intentional ministry of **Small Groups** is launched. Small groups become the way to make a large church feel small, an entry point and opportunity for community building, learning, and support.

**The Matter of the Crack**. In December, during the MBTA's Copley T Accessibility Project, jet-grout is inserted underground under high pressure, heaving our Dartmouth Street façade, resulting in a through-and-through crack, from below ground to the roof.

## 2009 | Moderator: Vard Johnson

The Garden Club of the Back Bay awards our gardens the **Magnolia Award**.

The **Planned Giving Committee** becomes a standing committee of the Council.

**Donald A. Wells** is named our Theologian in Residence.

We survive a devastating economic recession, ending the year with a surplus while growing our mission and outreach.

## 2010 | Moderator: Vard Johnson

We adopt the **Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century** at a meeting of the members which will inspire a revamped Sunday morning schedule, new Church School curriculum, full-time Director of Children and Family Ministries, revamped Christian Formation programs; and more.

Our gardens win the Mayor's **Golden Trowel Award**.

The United Church of Christ and the SALT Project produce Old South Church's **Bless video**.

Old South Church is designated a **United Church of Christ Center of Excellence**.

The Trustees begin to budget a portion of the endowment draw into a **Capital Reserve Fund** (starting at \$50k and adding \$50k more per year, until we reach \$350k per year; thereafter to grow with inflation). For instance, in 2022 the portion of the draw placed into the Capital Reserve Fund is over \$430k.

The church addresses growing instances of **Islamophobia** with speakers, public events, and interreligious programming.

We launch the first of our **Annual Mary Norton Society** events, a means to thank those who have named the church in their planned giving. In 2022, the Society has about 100 members who will, one day, support our ministries from heaven.

Old South Church's choir performs **The National Anthem** on Patriots Day at Fenway Park under the baton of Minister of Music, Harry Lyn Huff.

## 2011 | Moderator: Vard Johnson

Ron Buford becomes Old South Church's first African American pastor.

Old South hosts **Governor Deval Patrick's Interfaith Prayer Service** at the launch of his second term.

## 2012 | Moderator: Mark Schueppert (first openly gay moderator)

At a specially called, contested, and highly publicized meeting of the members, we vote to sell at auction our beta edition of the **Bay Psalm Book** (published in 1640). The vote to sell, to convert treasure into ministry, is 271 to 34.

We launch **Evening Worship** (Sundays at 6 p.m.) The service is centered on the baptismal font, lay testimonials, and a reaffirmation of our baptismal vows.

## 2013 | Moderator: Mark Schueppert

Old South's **Gospel Choir**, the invention of Harry Huff and Deb Washington, makes its debut under the direction of conductor and pianist, Tim Harbold.

On April 15, **two bombs** are detonated near the finish line of the Boston Marathon. Old South is within the FBI's crime perimeter from the 15<sup>th</sup> through the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April, thus inaccessible. Members and friends are among the survivors.

The first annual **Phillis Wheatley Sunday** is introduced.

Our beta edition of the Bay Psalm Book fetches **\$14.2 million at auction**, making it the most expensive book in the world. The proceeds secure Old South's future by endowing the care and cost of our building and, thus, freeing our pledges to support our ministries of *Mercy, Justice & Beauty*.

Old South undertakes **Project AIR** (Adventures In Renovation) to address \$8 million in deferred maintenance: largely HVAC, fire protection, and accessibility.

The church reaches a level of growth and financial security that enables the calling of **two Associate Ministers**: John Edgerton and Anthony Livolsi.

## 2014 | Moderator: Mark Schueppert

Old South hosts an interfaith prayer service on the occasion of the inauguration of **Marty Walsh** as Mayor of Boston.

**The Marathon Scarf Project**, the brainchild of Marilyn Adams and Diane Gaucher, wraps runners in scarves knit with courage and love the year after the bombings (some 7000+ hand knitted scarves from across the country and around the world are delivered to Old South Church for distribution).

**Easter Sunday and Marathon Sunday coincide** on the first anniversary of the Boston Marathon bombings, April 20, 2014. The line to get into the church goes round the block and we are forced to turn people away.

The first **Open Door Awards** are presented at Pride Morning Worship on June 14 (the award's inaugural recipients are Governor Deval Patrick, Bishop Tom Shaw, and Rev. Frank Schaefer).

Fulfilling the plan adopted 2010 in the **Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**, Old South hires Kate Nintcheu as its first full time Director of Family and Childrens Ministries and introduces the *Godly Play* curriculum into our church school.

Nancy Taylor becomes the first woman to speak/preach at **Friday Prayers at the Roxbury Mosque** (the largest mosque in New England), on April 11, 2014.

## 2015 | Moderator: Deb Washington (first African American moderator)

Co-founded by Old South, **Boston Warm** is born, a day center for unhoused persons.

**Middle Passage Sunday.** On August 26, we hold the first annual memorial service for early members of Old South Church of African descent (late 1600s through the early 1800s), most of whom were enslaved, and who, so far as we know, were not buried in marked graves.

## 2016 | Moderator: Deb Washington

The capital campaign, ***Our Faith. Our Time. Our Future. The Campaign for Old South*** is launched under the leadership of co-chairs Wayne Davis and Todd Krohne. We raise \$4.2 million by our anniversary year, 2019, adding to the endowment and endowing three funds: **Micah Mission, Teaching Church, and Open Door Productions.**

June R. Cooper is named **Theologian in the City.**

*In Memoriam*  
*HARRY LYN HUFF*  
(October 26, 1952 – November 3, 2016)

**Five Financial Disciplines** are introduced. These should secure our future as long as we are responsible for this exuberant and aging National Historic Landmark:

- Live within our endowment spending rule (currently at 4% of a rolling, three-year average)
- From the top of our endowment draw, annually place an adequate sum into the Capital Reserve Fund to maintain this 1875 National Historic Landmark, our platform and springboard for ministry.
- Conduct a vigorous, unabashed annual Stewardship campaign to fund each year's ministries of Justice, Mercy, & Beauty.
- Conduct a vigorous annual effort to promote and recruit for the Mary Norton Society (planned giving).
- Maintain financial transparency and reporting.

## 2017 | Moderator: Deb Washington

Old South votes to become a **Level II Sanctuary Church** supporting a person or persons in imminent danger of deportation.

**The 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee**, chaired by Paul and Debby Kuenstner, with its three task forces (*Celebrate!*, Tell the Story, and Faith in Action) is launched.

## 2018 | Moderator: Deb Washington

**(G)RACE Speaks**, Old South's conversations on race, launched in 2015 by Deb Washington, Ruth Purtilo, June Cooper and Nancy Taylor, becomes a standing committee of Council

**The Robert C. and Coley K. Elder Columbarium** is dedicated on July 1.

The Church Council approves the creation of a **Climate Crisis Task Force** with three active working groups: Climate Justice Advocacy, Environmental Stewardship, and Climate Communications.

**Mitchell Crawford** is appointed Minister of Music.

## 2019 | Moderator: Deb Washington

On May 12, with trumpet fanfare, confetti, a commissioned hymn, and festivities for all ages we kick off our **350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year** celebrations.



**The Crawford Library** is dedicated on November 17<sup>th</sup> to honor Senior Minister Emeritus, James W. Crawford.

Phase II of the Columbarium is accomplished: the installation of the **Memorial Tree** (a gift of Betty and Elizabeth Pitcher). The first 75 leaves bear the names of our members from the 1600s and 1700s who were enslaved or of African descent.

**The Urban Pastoral Ministry Program**, via a grant from the Lily Endowment, brings us Amo Ngoepe for a two-year pastoral residency.

**Katherine A. Schofield** comes on as Interim Associate Minister while **Shawn M. Fielder** (who had previously served here as a seminarian, then as our pastoral fellow), returns as Acting Associate Minister.

## 2020 | Moderator: Phil Stern

Old South Church's beloved Historian, **Evan Shu**, dies an untimely death.

**The Novel Coronavirus**, a plague of biblical proportions, insinuates itself among us, requiring that we close our great doors and transition from in-person gatherings to remote everything. We name a **COVID-19 Blue Ribbon Task Force** (composed of medical and public health professionals) which is convened at various stages and iterations of the pandemic to advise us on activities and mitigation.

(G)RACE Speaks helps us to wade deeply into a season of **national reckoning on race**, addressing the nation's, and this church's, original sin of racism.

In the midst of a pandemic and with the building shuttered, John Braught is hired to fill a new position: **Director of Operations**.

Our 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary book is published: **Old South Church in Boston, 1669-2019: a Concise Theological, Historical, & Whimsical Encyclopedia**. At 627 pages there are some 400 entries written by some 100 authors, most of whom are Old South Church members and staff.

## 2021 | Moderator: Phil Stern

**Carolyn Davis** retires as Director of the Old South Preschool. She worked at the Preschool for over forty years. **Summer Marsh**, one of our teachers, takes over as Director.

**The general endowment**, at \$47 million, fully funds building operations and capital repairs, freeing members' pledges to fuel ministries of *Justice, Mercy, & Beauty*.

**African Research Project**. Our Archivist, Emily Ross, researches early members who were enslaved as well as early members and ministers who were enslavers. We learn that seven of our twenty-eight founding families were enslavers; four (possibly five) of our first eight senior ministers were enslavers.

Nancy S. Taylor announces her **retirement**, effective at the end of May, 2022. The Leadership Committee, at the direction of the Church Council, begins to build the infrastructure to carry out the pastoral transition: a Celebration Team, an Interim Team, a Transition Team and, last but by no means least, a Search Team.

**Amo Ngoepe** is ordained to the Christian ministry during All-Church Worship on Sunday, December 12, 2021, making her the first person of color ordained at Old South Church.

As we learn to live with COVID-19 and make accommodations for remote members and friends, we install equipment to enable **hybrid worship and programming** and hire a multimedia team, led by Jamie Garuti.

## 2022 | Moderator: Phil Stern

As 2021 turns into 2022, the pandemic, which we had hoped would be in retreat, launches yet another assault via the alarmingly contagious **Omicron variant**.

**Howard Cha-Young Kim** begins as our Pastoral Resident via the Urban Pastoral Ministry Program (funded by the Lilly Endowment and in partnership with City Mission).

We are living into our new **hybrid reality**, engaging worshippers and members from across the country and around the world.

## Awards and Recognitions during my tenure at Old South

These awards are a reflection of the recognition and regard in which Old South Church and its ministries are held:

- Boston Magazine's *Best of Boston's New Faces*, 2005
  - *The Rabbi Bernard Mehlman Building Bridges Award*, 2006
  - Yale Divinity School's *Alumni Award for Distinction in Congregational Ministry*, 2009
  - New England School of Law, *Honorary Doctor of Humanities*, 2010
  - *The Rabbi Murray I. Rothman Award* for outstanding inter-religious leadership, 2012
  - Piedmont College, *Honorary Doctor of Humanities*, 2015
  - National Center for Race Amity, *Medal of Honor*, 2018
  - City Mission's *Light to the City Award*, 2019
  - Emma Willard School *Distinguished Alumni Award*, 2019
- 

## My Board and Committee Work Beyond Old South

*Current:*

- Pax World Funds, Independent Trustee | Governance Committee, chair
- Yale Divinity School, Dean's Advisory Council, co-chair
- Revolutionary Spaces, Trustee | Board Development Committee
- Miller Center for Interreligious Leadership (Hebrew College), Advisory Council
- Wassmuth Center for Human Rights Education (Boise ID), Advisory Board | founder
- Boisi Center for Religion in American Public Life (Boston College), Advisory Board
- Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology, Trustee Emeritus
- Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society, Trustee

*Past:*

- *common cathedral*, Board of Directors
- Old South Meeting House, Board of Managers
- Andover Newton Theological Seminary, Trustee | Trustee chair
- Boston Middle Passage Port Marker and Ceremony Project

## 2021 Messages from the Senior Minister

### May 20, 2021

*Dear Old South Church:*

*Greetings on this beautiful day.*

*This past Monday morning the Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts reported that the reopening date has been moved up two months to May 29, 2021. On that date most of the COVID-19 restrictions will be lifted. Wow.*

*On Monday evening Old South Church's COVID-19 Blue Ribbon Task Force met. Our first question to the docs, nurses and public health officials on the Task Force: "Do you agree with the Governor's revised time-line?" Their answer, "YES!" The science is in. The vaccines are exceptionally effective and the vaccination rate is high. New cases have dropped by 89% since January 8. COVID hospitalizations are down 88% since January 1 and the positive test rate is down by 88% from peaking at 8.7% on January 1 to 1% today.*

*Shazam. Well done, everybody. Now we have to figure out how to reopen Old South Church. It was relatively easy to shut down and transform ourselves into a fully remote church. There is more work to getting this old ship of faith out of dry dock and back out upon the high seas: bringing back the crew (paid and volunteer), agreeing on protocols and best practices, outfitting ourselves for robust hybrid worship, recruiting and retooling ushers, counters, teachers, etc.*

*At the same time, we are mindful that children under age 12 will not be vaccinated for many months. We also know that the vaccines are less effective for people whose immune systems are compromised. Moreover, most of us have been cold and flu free for over a year; there is something to be said for masking and hand washing. Therefore, this church of the Open Door will want to welcome back both the masked and the unmasked, the hale and the frail.*

*We soon hope to report to you that 100% of our staff are vaccinated. Similarly, we will be reaching out to all of you to ask if you have been vaccinated. A high vaccination rate will provide important reassurance to all who choose to gather in-person, especially the vulnerable.*

*Many people are nervous about reentry. These past fifteen months have been hellish for too many of you. Just because the reopening has been moved up, doesn't mean everyone is ready to climb aboard. Getting back to church, and to all the other things we used to do, will take some getting used to. When the time comes, we want you to feel safe and comfortable.*

*Stay tuned. You will hear from us in the coming days and weeks about changes during the summer and reopening more fully in the fall.*

*In the meantime, we continue to provide a series of remote opportunities:*

*All-Church Worship on Sundays at 10 a.m.*

*Jazz Coffee House on Thursdays at 6 p.m.*

*Daily Prayer, M-F at 12 noon.*

*As a reminder, our small groups, boards, committees, task forces and education continue.*

*I hope you are able to get outside and immerse yourself, body and soul, in God's good creation. Creation is on full display today. "Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy." (Psalm 98.8)*

*Faithfully – Nancy*

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### August 13, 2021

*Dear Old South Church:*

*Can you sing this to yourself? The tune is LEONI:*

*They did not build in vain, who founded here a church*

*As witness to God's love amid a world of pain;*

*They built upon the rock that is the risen Christ.*

*The one foundation laid that stands each earthly shock.*



*Earthly shock indeed. We are in the midst of the fourth wave of the novel coronavirus. Medical professionals lament “prognosis fatigue” as the virus shapeshifts from one variant to another, insinuating itself among us in yet more terrifying and virulent ways. Its ever changing mutations, its ebbs and flows, are exhausting to keep track of, frustrating, and confounding.*

*As there is yet no vaccine for children under age twelve, they are our most pressing concern. Children are contracting the Delta variant and it is frightening. At the same time, we acknowledge real mental and physical health concerns as the virus continues to impact the lives of the most vulnerable, keeping too many people isolated, causing loneliness, depression, cognitive decline, and physical debility.*

*In the face of this malevolent, ever-evolving virus, Old South Church will do what we know how to do: pivot and adjust in order to mitigate risk. This earthly shock, wearying and frightening as it is, is no match for the resources of our Christian faith. Witnessing to God’s love is what we do. We’ve got this, Old South Church!*

*Our COVID 19 Blue Ribbon Task Force met on the evening of August 10th to discuss the current situation and agree to new protocols. Led by church moderator Phil Stern, and informed by Old South medical professionals, please find below the new guidance of the Task Force for the immediate future. These protocols are intended to mitigate risk and prevent the continued spread of the virus, while enabling some forms of gathering and social interaction. The protocols are not forever. They are for now. We will get through this, just not yet. As the situation is ever-evolving, so will be our response.*

### **Effective Immediately**

*Effective immediately and until further notice, the church requires universal masking. In order to enter the building, all must be masked. Vaccinated or unvaccinated, all must mask.*

*Our Sunday Watch Parties (through Labor Day) will be relocated to Mary Norton Hall (MNH) to allow for social distancing. MNH is air-conditioned with great ventilation. Bonus: check out the new MNH curtains installed during the pandemic!*

### **September**

*Our September programming plans have likewise been altered.*

*Beginning on September 12, we will hold a single Sunday service: All-Church Worship at 10 a.m.. It will be held in-person, in the Sanctuary (masked, socially distanced), and live-streamed for all who choose to join us remotely.*

*There will be no in-person, on-site church school for children younger than 12 on Sundays. We will continue to offer robust, interactive, remote programming. In addition, Kate Nintcheu and the families of our church are gathering next week to discuss creative, outdoors opportunities for children and family ministries to supplement our online offerings.*

*Beginning on September 9th, our Thursday evening, 6 p.m. Jazz Worship will be held live, in-person, in the Sanctuary and live-streamed for all who choose to join us remotely. (We will say goodbye to our Virtual Jazz Coffee Houses, but tune in for Jazz Worship at the same time and place.)*

*Ensemble singers and musicians, professional and volunteer, must be vaccinated and masked, and will socially distance. For the time being, we will forgo refreshments and in-person communion.*

### **You**

*If you are eligible, but have not yet been vaccinated (or fully vaccinated) against the novel coronavirus, we implore you to do so as soon as possible. Vaccination is the best defense against the virus’s mutations. Vaccinate for the sake of the children, and to smother the virus, denying it purchase. Vaccinate as an act of love for neighbor. We are in this together. Together, we can get out of it.*

*And, make sure ALSO to get vaccinated against the flu as soon as that vaccine is available.*

*If you do not feel well, stay home; in any case, don’t come to church. Should you need assistance, reach out to [care@oldsouth.org](mailto:care@oldsouth.org).*

### **Old South Staff**

*Old South Church staff are 100% fully vaccinated. Every effort is being made to give individual members of staff opportunity, depending on their circumstances and vulnerability, to mitigate risk to themselves and their families in the performance of their responsibilities.*

## Hybrid Worship

We are in the midst of installing IT equipment (cameras, mics, and software) to much improve your experience for all who continue to worship with us remotely. The equipment is being installed in the Sanctuary, Chapel, and Mary Norton Hall. Two part-time specialists have been hired, starting in September, to assist Jamie Garuti as Livestream Production Assistants. The extraordinary technologies of 2021 truly enable to us to be distant, yet gathered; remote, yet assembled. Our Capital Campaign of some years ago, and the endowed fund, Open Door Productions, are saving the day!

## Boards, Committees, Task Forces, Small Groups

As we indicated some months ago, each group is free to make its own decisions about whether to meet in-person or remotely. That remains the case. What has changed: until further notice, if an Old South group gathers to meet in-person, all will need to mask and social distance.

The hymn with which I began, continues:

In every place our world is storm and tempest tossed,  
The flames of fear and hate are evil's flags unfurled;  
Yet still the Spirit's power in wind and fire of love  
Pours gifts upon the church for service in this hour.

*This I believe with all my heart.*

---

## June 4, 2021

*Dear Old South Church,*

### We Believe in Science

*The COVID-19 virus is in abeyance in the US, the vaccination rate is high, and the vaccines themselves are extraordinarily effective. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has therefore lifted most preventative restrictions. There are, however, two populations who remain vulnerable to infection: children under age 12 for whom there is no vaccine, and persons for whom the vaccines have not yet proven effective. The CDC and Old South Church's COVID-19 Blue Ribbon Task Force agree with the Commonwealth's assessment!*

*Now, how to reopen? This Old Ship of Faith needs a little time to get out of dry dock. We are in the process of contacting all our former ushers, docents and hospitality volunteers to ask who is prepared to return. We are also contacting our receptionists and weekend sexton to see who is coming back.*

*The following applies from July through August. We will tackle fall protocols and schedule at a later date.*

### We Value Diversity

*Many are eager to return to a yet-to-be-revealed post-pandemic era. Others remain cautious. That's okay. We value diversity. We will return to Old South both masked and unmasked, immune and vulnerable, bold and timid. Let us therefore extend to each other barrels of grace and cornucopias of understanding. As we are wont to say: "No matter who you are, or where you are on life's (pandemic) journey, you are welcome here." Amen.*

*Some members of the Old South Church staff, however, are exhausted. Despite being physically closed, we have maintained all programs AND learned filming, special effects, and editing. We want to return refreshed and ready for a full, glorious, boisterous, brassy, pull-out-the-stops celebratory reopening in September. To that end, and to get to there from here, we have devised the following simplified transitional plans which will allow staff to take vacations and ease the workload, while fulfilling our cherished charism of being the Church of the Open Door.*

### We Value Our Open Door—Soft Opening

*Starting on Sunday, July 4th and going through Sunday, September 5th you are invited to worship with us either in-person (in our air-conditioned Chapel) or remotely (from wherever you are). In either case, whether you are in the Chapel, on your couch, or at the beach, we will all watch the same pre-recorded, edited worship services (what you have been used to for the past fifteen months). In other words, those who attend in-person will participate in a "watch*

party" (via a screen and projector). You can still use the chat feature to communicate with the other worshippers, and you can greet old friends and newcomers in-person. We will have a receptionist, ushers, docents, and clergy to welcome you and any visitors. Our Minister of Music will be on hand to provide voluntaries as we gather and depart. We will join our voices in the singing of hymns. You will be able to access the Sunday bulletin and announcements via a QR Code. (We can assist you with this; you need only have a smartphone.) Post worship refreshments will be served either out of doors or in the Narthex.

Our doors and our hearts will once again welcome the world, albeit in a somewhat altered form. We will be able to judge everyone's comfort and interest in reentry while practicing on those who are early reentry adopters.

### **We Embrace the Future**

- At 352 years old, we've seen a thing or two. We understand disruption and trauma. We are skilled at adaptation and innovation. We are opportunists who will use the pandemic to catapult ourselves into new behaviors and practices. We have neither the expectation nor the desire to return to the pre-COVID world of racial injustice, spiraling climate crisis, and yawning economic inequities. Amen?  
*A few ground rules (July - August)*
- There will be a "Socially Distanced Section" in the back of the Chapel with chairs spaced apart;
- The unvaccinated, including children under twelve, should be masked;
- Singing is permitted;
- Refreshments are permitted. We will serve coffee and snacks after worship. You are welcome to bring your own coffee or water bottles into the stone chapel for worship.
- Let's greet each other with elbow and fist bumps.
- If you wish to bring children under aged 12, and are interested in childcare, please contact Kate Nintcheu ([children@oldsouth.org](mailto:children@oldsouth.org)). We will plan our childcare support as interest is gauged, but church school will not gather until September.

### **What Is On Tap (July - August)**

#### SUNDAYS

Morning Communion at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom

All Church Worship at 10 a.m. via live-stream AND in-person watch party!

What's the Word with the preacher and occasional Forums at 11 a.m. via Zoom

#### THURSDAYS

Virtual Jazz Coffee House at 6 p.m. via live stream

Apres Jazz Coffee House Social Hour at 6:30pm via Zoom

#### DURING THE WEEK

Midday Prayer, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, via Facebook

Various small groups (interested? Write [Katherine@oldsouth.org](mailto:Katherine@oldsouth.org))

Occasional gatherings for music or mission or fellowship. Keep tuned

### **We Are a People of Hope—Full Re-Entry**

We expect to fully reopen on Sunday, September 12th with a Celebration of the Christian Life and Blessing of the Backpacks. (Oh, do those backpacks need blessing!) By this time we will hope to have our new hybrid technologies installed (screen, projector, and cameras) to accommodate those who will continue to worship with us remotely. (We have found faraway friends with whom we are determined to maintain relationships.) This is to be followed by a Festival of New Beginnings on Sunday, September 19th. We will likely have new protocols to share with you in anticipation of our hope-full September re-entry.

Questions? You know how to reach me.

Summer blessings to each and all. - Nancy



## **June 25, 2021**

*Dear Old South Church - Greetings, grace and peace to you. While the world is sorely lacking in peace, we do have the gift of Christ's peace -- a peace the world cannot give -- to which to cling for our lives. Thanks be to God for that.*

*While our full, triumphal reopening occurs after Labor Day—including the return of our three weekly worship services—we have planned some events we hope will whet your Return-to-Church-Appetite.*

### **Jazz Ice Cream Parlor**

*Thursday, July 1st at 6 p.m. - Outside on the Piazza*

*Join us for danceable music from the Willie Sordillo Ensemble and free ice cream from Somerville's Tipping Cow, a Black-owned business. (I'll do anything to lure you out from your pandemic-induced lair.)*

*Thoughtful Patriotism*

### **All-Church Worship**

*Sunday, July 4th at 10 a.m. - Gordon Chapel (air conditioned)*

*Join us in-person for a Worship Watch Party as Old South presents music and readings for a thoughtful patriotism.*

*Following worship, take a docented tour of the sanctuary or gather around the piano for real, in-person singing with Mitchell Crawford at the keyboard. Why not make a date with a friend for lunch?*

*Planning to bring children? We are ready to provide child care/companionship outside of the worship space by request.*

*Please contact Kate ([children@oldsouth.org](mailto:children@oldsouth.org)) to arrange it.*

*Can't join us in-person? Tune into our All-Church Sunday Worship at the same time: <https://oldsouth.org/Sundays>*

### **A Prayer of Blessing**

*Gracious God, bless Old South Church as we emerge from pandemic, from isolation, from shuttered doors, from wariness and distancing. Recall us to the delight of each other's good company. Let these old walls resound again with laughter and hearty greetings. Let the aroma of fresh coffee, the sight of familiar faces, the sounds of piano and organ, bells and horns, infuse chapel and sanctuary, hallway and stairwell. Let the exiles return and the diaspora regather. Bless us as we emerge from ordeal and trial and reacquaint ourselves with the pleasures of fellowship as the church regathered, re-membered: singing, praying, breaking bread, rejoined as Christ's own sweet body. Bless us. Amen.*

### **Save the Date**

JAZZ Worship, Thursdays at 6 p.m. in the Gordon Chapel, beginning September 9

FIRST Worship, Sundays at 9 a.m. in the Gordon Chapel, beginning September 12

FESTIVAL Worship, Sundays at 11 a.m. in the Sanctuary, beginning September 12

HEALING Worship, 2nd Sundays at 10 a.m. in the Columbarium, beginning September 12

### **September 12**

*Festival of the Christian Life*

### **September 19**

*A Festival of New Beginnings*

### **Protocols**

*Please note, per the CDC, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and our COVID 19 Blue Ribbon Task Force, fully vaccinated people need not (but may) wear masks. Those who are unvaccinated are required to mask up. Children under age 12 who have not been vaccinated, and any adults who work with them, must be masked. Indoors, we will provide an area for those who wish to socially distance.*

- Nancy

**June 29, 2021**

*Dear Old South Church in Boston:*

**Update on the Tower Masonry Repair Project**

*Workers are about halfway through the erection of scaffolding that will completely surround the Tower, from the street level to the tip of the Tower roof. The project will address several matters: missing slate roof tiles, loose masonry, repointing, and the cause of cracking on some stones along three corners of the Tower. The repairs will begin in early or mid-July (once the scaffolding is up) and are expected to conclude in mid-December. Visit this link for images and detailed explanation. <https://www.oldsouth.org/news/repairs-old-south-church-bell-tower>*

*As our hearts are turned to the tragic collapse of a residential building in Surfside, Florida, I want to assure you that Old South Church's Tower project is not prompted by structural failure. We are addressing normal masonry repairs for an old, stone building. The Tower's steel infrastructure is not compromised. Indeed, the purpose of the current project is to prevent structural deterioration. In this process, once the cracked stones are removed from three corners of the Tower, the underlying steel structure will be cleaned and sealed to prevent corrosion before the stones are replaced.*

*We feel confident in this project because of the investigation that preceded this work, done with the oversight of our historic preservationist architects, who, with their structural engineers, are regularly in and out of our building. We are up-to-date with the City on required inspections. Old South leadership -- key staff and the Operations Committee -- have a good handle on the scope of this project. We are guided in this work by our ever evolving 20-year capital improvements plan.*

*One of the great achievements of the church's leadership in the past decade is the Capital Reserve Fund. We add to the fund annually from the endowment draw, enabling us to keep up with building maintenance and repairs without "assessing" the congregation. While your generosity fuels our ministries, the endowment draw pays for the building's needs. We believe this is as it should be.*

*Questions? You know how to reach me.*

*Keep cool - Nancy*

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**November 8, 2021**

*Dear Old South Church in Boston,*

*We rejoice that the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended pediatric COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5 to 11. Alleluia! This is another crucial step toward keeping one another safe from the virus which has turned our lives upside down.*

*The Blue Ribbon COVID-19 Task Force, which includes parents of young children, fully endorses vaccinating children who are eligible. The vaccine is safe and effective. Vaccination protects our children as well as reduces disruptions to in-person learning and activities by helping curb community transmission. With increased vaccination, we are closer to the return of our vibrant intergenerational church life. We encourage you to vaccinate your children as soon as possible. If you have questions or concerns about the vaccine, reach out to your pediatrician, your school nurse, or a member of our task force.*

*If you are an adult and have not yet been vaccinated, we implore you to do so. If you are eligible for a booster, we encourage you to take it. We also highly recommend you receive a flu vaccine.*

*To find a vaccination appointment in the Commonwealth, visit [vaxfinder.mass.gov/](https://vaxfinder.mass.gov/)*

*We thank God for the scientists, doctors, and researchers who have brought us to this point. Get the shot.*

*The Blue Ribbon COVID-19 Task Force*

*Phil Stern, Moderator, Dr. Allen Gifford, Dr. Hillary Mull, Dr. David Duong, Dr. Kyle Nelson, Dr. Lisa Mahnke, David Becker, NP, Bradford Swing, Rich Hassinger, Nancy Kukulian, Steve Holt, Ralph Watson, Rev. Nancy Taylor, Rev. Shawn Fiedler, Rev. Katherine Schofield, Helen McCrady, Jamie Garuti, John Braught*

# Statement to Old South Church on my Upcoming Retirement

Nancy S. Taylor, Senior Minister

November 10, 2021

When I graduated from seminary in 1981 and made my way to serve my first churches—three small churches in rural Maine—it never occurred to me I would know the privilege of serving at a place like Old South Church. I am the envy of my colleagues. It is about so much more than this church's venerable history, its stunning facility, and its awesome location. It is primarily about you: a deep bench of brilliant, faithful, earnest lay leaders who, working side by side with a gifted staff, make it all happen.

For me, these past sixteen years at Old South have been all about collaboration. While I enjoy the privilege of a splendid study on the third floor of Old South's Parish House, it is you - and all who came before you, all who serve and lead, each doing their part—who make this church what it is. And, what it is, is special, indeed.

My years at Old South Church have been eventful! I started a list of all that has occurred (from "the Crack" to selling the most expensive book in the world) but the list is pretty long. Never a dull moment at this church. You have proved yourself adaptable to the challenges and opportunities of each new circumstance.

There are a couple of reasons why this timing feels right:

First, this church deserves fresh leadership and, I dare say, younger leadership. I have been doing this work for 40 years. While the privilege of this office is grand (I still have to pinch myself every day), the burden is not light. It is time for someone with fresh strength to take it up. Old South Church and its mission deserve that. Moreover, I believe in the next generation. I believe that good leadership is generative. As a Teaching Church of the United Church of Christ, we are a generative church. There are excellent leaders out there who will bless this church's ministry in the future.

There is another reason why the timing is right. Old South is at an inflection point. We recently celebrated our 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary and with that, the Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century expired. That Vision, adopted in 2010 at a meeting of the members has guided, challenged, and shaped us for a decade. It is time now for Old South Church to develop a new vision for a new day. This pastoral transition will kick-start such a process. In preparation for seeking new leadership, the congregation will complete a UCC Church Profile. This is a thorough and considerable undertaking. In order to complete the Church Profile, the congregation will need to come together, to listen, learn, and lean into the unfolding future into which God is calling this church. It will be an important process of discernment, much like the one that led to the adoption of the Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I believe the time is right in another way. Emergence from the vice-grip of the pandemic is an opportune time for new leadership. There will be some rebuilding to be done as the pandemic has taken a toll on our membership. As I have noted before: not a few members relocated during the pandemic; others aged out and are no longer able to fulfil leadership roles; still others got out of the church-going habit and may never get back into it. At the same time, we have taken in fewer members during the pandemic than what is required to keep up with attrition. This, however, is not a crisis. We are doing meaningful ministry, impactful ministry. We have excellent staff and lay leaders. Our financial position is strong. The building is being tended to. Our boards, committees and task forces are producing programs, authoring ministries, and bearing witness to a gracious and generous God. Moreover, through the use of technologies, we are reaching an ever wider audience with our message. As we sail into a season of transition this vessel is shipshape and watertight.

As for me, I plan to stay in Boston. It is where I live. Retirement will free me to explore and appreciate the riches of this city. There is traveling to be done; friends to catch up with; more than enough projects on my list to keep me busy; and I will continue to serve on boards beyond Old South Church. In addition, my mother is 92 and I look forward to spending more time with her.

In the meantime, for the next six months (through to my retirement at the end of May 2022) I am committed to working with church leaders to ensure a positive and productive transition process.

A special thank you to several leaders who, by virtue of their elected positions, have been early partners and wise counselors in the initial conversations about this transition: Phil Stern (Moderator), Bill Bulkeley (Treasurer), Kate Silfen (Historian), Rob Gabler (clerk), Kristi Geary (Chair of the Board of Trustees) and, more recently, David Becker (Chair of our Leadership Committee). In addition, as you will see below, a number of people have already stepped up to fill early transition leadership roles.

As I began, so shall I end: this church's deep bench of brilliant, faithful, earnest lay leaders, working side by side with a uniquely gifted staff, is well equipped to guide and lead Old South Church into God's new tomorrow. What we have before us is not a marathon, not a matter of individual attainment. What lies before us is a relay race—requiring teamwork—each taking a turn to achieve a careful, thoughtful passing of the baton. We've got this, Old South Church. You've got this.

Over the next six months I ask you to bathe your church and its leaders in prayer. Ask for God's guidance. Cheer your leaders on. Participate when asked. Bring to this work your warm hearts, wise heads, and love for the church.

Please see below an accompanying letter from your church leaders.

From one who is and remains immensely blessed and grateful,

- Nancy

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*Dear Church:*

*Some of us only know Old South with Nancy Taylor as the Senior Minister. For us, her retirement, which she communicated to the Church Council at its October meeting and announced to the congregation this week, seems unimaginable.*

*Others, however, have a longer view. Many remember Jim Crawford at the helm, of course, and still others remember Jim's predecessor, Fredrick Meek.*

*The fact is that Nancy is the 20th Senior Minister. And while she will be impossible to replace, Old South has learned a thing or two about pastoral transition over its 350-plus years. We are in a very good position to support her and encourage her transition to a much-deserved rest from a working lifetime of church leadership.*

*In other words, we've got this. Anyone who knows Nancy also knows that she would not be leaving us now if she were not convinced that we have in place all the means necessary to properly sustain us during a transition. She is not leaving us suddenly, and she will be assisting with early stages of the transition.*

*Now is not yet the moment to recognize Nancy for all she has done for Old South over the years. That she has richly blessed us by her love and leadership is beyond question. What we can do now to honor her is roll up our sleeves and prepare for her eventual departure and for the transition to a new Senior Minister, whoever they may be.*

*The following members have agreed to define what the bridge between Nancy's leadership and a new leadership will look like, serving as the **INTERIM Team**: Nancy Kulkan, Ashton Goodfield, Kristi Geary, Stephanie LaShoto-Westfield, Christine Del Favero, David Duong, Eliette Hilaire, Randy Billings, Pam Roberts*

*A **CELEBRATION Team** will also begin planning the best way to commemorate Nancy's tenure and her eventual departure: Bill Adams, Marilyn Jackson Adams, Rev. June Cooper, Rob Gabler, Diane Gaucher, Priscilla Geigis, Karen Hand, Helen McCrady, Caroline Murray, Kate Silfen, Deb Washington*

*Eventually, we will assemble and announce a **TRANSITION Team** to draft a church profile and to outline what the church is seeking in its next senior minister. In this stage of the process there will be a lot of opportunity for plenty of congregational input. Finally, an actual **SEARCH Team** will be appointed. Through the early stages of this process, Nancy will still be with us, doing what she has always done: guiding, teaching, sustaining and offering help.*

*Importantly, Old South Church leaders are not alone in this undertaking. We are assisted at every step by the Rev. Alex Shea Will, Area Minister, Metropolitan Boston Association, Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ. Your Church Council, in conversation with Rev. Shea Will, has agreed to a fairly aggressive timeline, hoping to lessen the span between Nancy's departure and the call of the 21<sup>st</sup> senior minister.*

*Change is uncomfortable but inevitable. It is also exciting, a time to fully consider how we can best remain not only relevant but central to a changing Boston. With God's help—and with the support of each other—Old South will persevere through Nancy's departure, grow as a congregation, and become readier than ever to carry on God's work for the next 350 years.*

*Sincerely,*  
Phil Stern, Moderator  
Rob Gabler, Clerk  
Kate Silfen, Historian  
Bill Bulkeley, Treasurer  
Kristi Geary, Chair of Trustees

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### **An Example of the Urgency and Meaning of Our Interreligious Work:**

President's Message: After Colleyville

By Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfeld, President, Hebrew College, Jan 20, 2022

*Dear friends, near and far,*

*At 7:10 this past Saturday night, as we watched, waited, and prayed while the terrifying hostage situation unfolded in Colleyville, the following message arrived in my email inbox:*

*"Colleagues: I am keeping vigil with all of you as we lend our fiercest prayers for a peaceful resolution to the hostage situation in Texas. God help us. The work of the Miller Center matters desperately."*

*The message was from Reverend Nancy Taylor of Old South Church in Boston, written to a small group of people—Jewish, Christian, and Muslim—who serve on the Advisory Council of **Hebrew College's Betty Ann Miller Center for Interreligious Learning & Leadership**.*

*I was grateful that she wrote so clearly, simply, and succinctly. I am with you. God help us. Our work matters. Above all, I was grateful that she wrote.*

*A few hours later, we learned that the hostages had emerged safely. Nancy wrote again, presciently, to say: "A good outcome for the hostages, but the trauma, exhaustion and relentless wariness continues." Indeed. We are grateful beyond words that the hostages of Congregation Beth Israel escaped safely last Saturday night. And we know in our bones that this story did not begin there, nor does it end there.*

*Why do I share this now?*

*First, I re-learned an important lesson that night. So often, we want to reach out to someone we know is in pain and we hold back. Because words feel inadequate. Or because we fear that we will somehow embarrass ourselves by choosing the wrong words. Nancy reminded me that it is worth taking the risk. However small and inadequate the gesture may feel to us, it may mean more to another than we will ever know. It is worth taking the risk.*

*Second, in the days that followed, I heard something else, especially from my younger Jewish colleagues. I heard that their non-Jewish friends were very quiet about this subject. Silent, actually. And that silence was unsettling, isolating, painful. How could it be, they wondered, especially in their circles on social media, that there was such an enormous divide between their Jewish friends—deeply shaken by this most recent act of anti-Semitic violence—and their non-Jewish friends—seemingly oblivious to what had taken place..*

*I was surprised to hear this, at first, but I shouldn't have been. It is one among countless examples of the ways in which we have surrounded ourselves (whether literally or virtually) with people who think like us, speak like us, read the news like us. We may do so seeking safety. But it is becoming clearer and clearer that, separated in our self-protective silos, our lives are ultimately both impoverished and imperiled.*

*In her exquisitely, aching beautiful TED talk entitled "The Dangers of a Single Story," **[Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The danger of a single story | TED Talk]** Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie speaks about our tendency to reduce ourselves and each other to "a single story." When we do this, it diminishes our humanity, it flattens us, and sometimes it threatens our very lives.*

*My plea to all of us this week: if you have been telling yourself a single story about what it means to be a Jew in America today, try listening more carefully—and generously—to voices that interrupt and disrupt your single story.*

*If, for example, you are someone who thinks "they're all out to get us," then allow yourself to hear the voice of Reverend Nancy Taylor saying, "I am with you."*

*If you are someone, for example, who thinks "it can't happen here," or antisemitism is not something you need to take seriously, try reading this important piece by Yair Rosenberg in today's Atlantic. **Why So Many People Still Don't Understand Anti-Semitism – The Atlantic.***

*This is our work, more urgent now than ever. The work of fighting against the dangers of a single story. This is the work of pluralism, it is the work that our multi-vocal Jewish tradition summons us to, and it is the work of all serious education.*

*This work demands of us intellectual honesty and rigor, and it also requires strengthening the muscles of our aching hearts. We need to cultivate hearts that are subtle, supple, and resilient enough to hold more than a single story, to make room for truths that are more layered and complex—in other words, more human—than what our current ideological echo chambers allow.*

*To my dear colleagues at Hebrew College, to our treasured alumni, to our friends and partners, to all those bravely doing this work in communities all over the country, in Israel, and around the world, I want to say: I am with you. God help us. Our work matters.*

*Blessings,*

*Rabbi Sharon*



# Slavery, Truth-Telling & Repair

## An Interim Report to Old South Church in Boston

By Nancy S. Taylor

On June 25, 2021, Derek Chauvin, a white, Minneapolis police officer, was sentenced to 22.5 years in prison for the murder of George Floyd, a Black man. While Floyd was handcuffed and lying face down on the street, Chauvin knelt on Floyd's neck for a cruel, excruciating, and inexplicable nine minutes and 29 seconds. Floyd's crime? It was alleged he used a counterfeit \$20 bill to purchase a pack of cigarettes. The entire murder was videotaped. It served to expose the ugly underbelly of this country's racism and initiated a long delayed, much needed reckoning on racial justice and police reform. This was true of our nation, of Christianity, and of Old South Church in Boston.

In their 2021 book, *Reparations: a Christian Call for Repentance and Repair*, Duke L. Kwon and Gregory Thompson argue there are three "practices of repair" that are necessary to account for hundreds of years of enslaving and trading in human beings: 1) Repairing Truth, 2) Repairing Power, and 3) Repairing Wealth. I will use the rubrics of those practices to report on Old South Church's ongoing work of repair.

### Repairing Truth:

#### Acknowledging the Truth | Recovering the Truth | Memorializing the Truth

We have stories we like to tell about our revered history. They are not untrue, but neither are they the whole truth:

- *The Selling of Joseph*, printed in 1700 and penned by an Old South Church lay leader, Samuel Sewall, is a biblically informed argument against enslaving others.
- Our 15<sup>th</sup> minister, Jacob M. Manning, a radical abolitionist, swung open the doors of the Meeting House to offer it as a recruiting center for the Union Army. A thousand men signed up and persuaded Manning to follow them into the field of battle as their chaplain. The church gave him leave and so he did.
- Famous members such as Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Adams and Phillis Wheatley were all opposed to slavery (although Franklin came to that position late in life).
- We hosted the meetings which led to the Boston Tea Party (and have been getting into hot water ever since).

In this national season of racial reckoning, we are uncovering lost stories and learning to tell more complete stories:

- I asked our archivist, Emily Ross, to do as much research as she could undertake on both our early members of African descent (enslaved and free) and on our early ministers and members who were enslavers. Her research—difficult, painstaking, often frustrating with tons of dead ends—resulted in two lists (enslaved and enslavers) and as much detail about members who were enslaved or of African descent as she could find (family members, vocation or skills, marriage, burial, birth or death dates, wills, bills of sale, etc). This list has been posted online on relevant sites with hopes that it will contribute to the growing research. Due to this research we now know that seven of our twenty-eight founding families were enslavers. We now know that four of our first eight ministers were enslavers.
- We initiated an annual service of remembrance, Middle Passage Sunday, during which we read aloud the names of our early African members, some of whom survived the Middle Passage, others of whom were descendants of survivors. Annually, these early African members are named, wept over, and asked forgiveness of.
- We hold an Annual Phillis Wheatley Sunday in which we tell her story, recall her courage, and name her among the saints of this church. Ms. Wheatley joined Old South and was baptized in our Meeting House on August 18, 1771, choosing not to join the church of the Wheatleys, who enslaved her.
- The names of our early members of African descent are now memorialized on the leaves of our Memorial Tree, located within our Columbarium, rendering visible those who were formerly invisible.
- We continue to preach, run programs, mount all-church book reads, and run classes to name, confess, address, and correct our own history of racism.
- We have baked into our weekly staff meetings exercises on Diversity, Access, Inclusion and Equity.

- (G)RACE Speaks wrote a four-session, interactive curriculum based on the Fruits of the Spirit and we have run it several times, inviting and challenging all our members to take the class. As of this writing over 100 (of our 600) members have taken the course.
- We partnered with City Mission to undertake Pilgrimages to Seek Truth and Justice (Montgomery, Alabama), as well as Boston Green Book Tours.
- We post statements and resources on our website.
- I served on the Boston Middle Passage Port Marker and Ceremonies Project. The project installed and then celebrated a marker on Long Wharf which recognizes those who arrived in Boston via the Middle Passage as well as those who perished in the crossing.

## **Repairing Power:**

### **Seeing Power | Bringing Power | Enabling Power**

- We launched Jazz Worship (2005) to serve as a space where African American music is featured. Many of our members of color have been attracted to Old South Church through Jazz Worship.
- We started our own Gospel Choir (2013) to diversify our worship and musical expressions.
- (G)RACE Speaks, Old South Church's holy conversations on race, became a standing committee of Council in 2018.
- We have folded Moments of Black History into worship throughout February and use our corner signboard to highlight Black History Month.
- We are intentional and dedicated to diversifying our staff and lay leaders throughout the life of the church, with special attention to areas of our life that are public and visible.
- During this national season of racial reckoning we offered a Grief Group for Old South people of color.
- Our outdoor signage (banners, posters, and corner signboard) gives witness to our commitment to a diverse and equitable world, with messages like "Black Lives Matter," "Love Thy (Muslim) Neighbor as Thyself," "Reject Racism," "Fight Climate Change."
- (G)RACE Speaks has encouraged every board, committee, and task force to place on its agenda the topic: How can *this* body work to overcome racism?

## **Repairing Wealth:**

### **Building Capacity for Wealth | Removing Obstacles to Wealth | Transferring Wealth**

- The trustees invested a portion of our endowment with Illumen Capital, an impact fund of funds addressing systemic inequity by reducing racial and gender bias in investing.
- We opened a checking account at OneUnited, the US's largest Black owned bank, and encourage our members to do the same.
- The church actively seeks vendors of color and we encourage our members to do the same.
- Our outreach grants in 2021 were awarded to partner organizations which are run or owned by persons of color.
- We are deeply engaged in our partnership with Snowden High School, with whom we share this block.

## **Summary**

This is an interim report. Much remains to be done. Conversations are ongoing. We are a work in progress. We are committed to this work.

# Interim Associate Minister

While 2021 has been a bit of a rollercoaster ride, both emotionally and programmatically, there have been moments of truly transcendent beauty and spiritual growth for all of us. One such moment came at our All-Church Retreat (an in-person gathering in 2021 after being cancelled in 2020). Our focus was the story of Nehemiah and the Israelites return from exile. In planning the retreat during the summer, with COVID rates at an all-time low and vaccines readily available for all, we focused on exploring who Old South is as a community “now that we’re returning from exile.” However, by early October when we gathered, we came to see that—like for us—the Israelites return from exile was not a finish line that was crossed when the temple was rebuilt or the book of the Law was read in the presence of the community. The return from exile took place over time as the people returned to the land, rebuilt their homes, reestablished connections and eventually rebuilt the temple and returned to worship. And—like us—the Israelites experienced setbacks and uncertainty. Still, in the midst of turbulent times they relied on one another, listened for the word of God and dreamed extravagant dreams of hope. In 2021 we’ve been called to be a Nehemiah people—assessing what’s really important and what we will carry forward with us, welcoming in new members of the community, and remaining open to the moving of the Spirit.



## Worship

Worship in 2021 had to remain creative and flexible. In the first half of the year we continued to produce online-only worship and were able to provide meaningful and special services in this way. We also continued to offer Daily Prayers via Facebook Live from January to June (thank you David Story and Amo Ngoepe for your help with this). In the summer we began tentative steps to return to the building by offering Worship Watch Parties. The experience of gathering together, singing together, and praying together again after such a long time apart was deeply moving. When we shifted worship again in the fall to our hybrid format, it was a gift to be leading prayers and preaching with a congregation in the room. Of course, as the Omicron variant loomed at the end of the year we had to make some hard decisions, including taking our Christmas Eve services entirely online. And hopes of returning to First Worship—which seemed like a real possibility in early December—had to be put on hold. Still, through the ups and downs and changes, our church community showed flexibility and steadfast support. Thank you! This, more than anything, is what has helped me through this challenging year.

## Christian Formation

In the first half of the year we continued to provide all programming in an online format, including church school, youth group, small groups, and the Community Hour Forum. In the summer we took a hiatus from most programming to allow a period of rest and planning. In September, as we returned to in-person worship opportunities, our programming moved to a hybrid model. Church School adapted to the rapidly changing COVID landscape by creating classes for children both online and in-person outside each Sunday through the Fall. Youth Group and Confirmation Class were able to meet in-person through the fall as these older students were all quickly vaccinated. In September, October and November we offered “Garden Worship” outside at the Public Garden once a month. Thank you to Kathleen Simone who served as our Storyteller and Joe Carr who led our music. We were thrilled to be able to hold an All-Church Retreat this year, though we limited the retreat to a one-day experience, mostly held outside. It was lovely to enjoy the Rolling Ridge Retreat Center in North Andover and our facilitator Richard Spalding was excellent. Attendance for the retreat was 43, including 6 children.

Almost all small groups continued through the year meeting virtually (one group has been meeting in-person and socially distanced for much of the year). We currently have nine small groups meeting regularly, with around 90 people in attendance. Three more groups are getting ready to launch in early 2022.

Our Community Hour Forum topics in 2021 included: Socially Responsible Investing, Music in the Black Church Tradition, GBIO Restructuring and Listening Sessions, Old South at the Oscars, Celebrating the life and work of Byron Rushing, “Banned in Boston” by Neil Miller, Small Steps to a Healthy Planet, Boston Food Forest Coalition, a four-week

study of ‘Mindfulness and Christian Spirituality,” and Advent through the Arts. In the spring the Forum was held via Zoom. When we returned to in-person worship in the fall the Forum moved to a hybrid model via vimeo. As we begin 2022 we will continue in a hybrid format, but will utilize Zoom and a new camera system (the Owl) which will help improve the experience of all participants, whether at home or at Old South.

## **Membership**

The Membership Committee has continued to focus on three areas of work—helping visitors get connected, helping newcomers get engaged, and helping church members feel seen and known. We have been especially aware of the ways our online worship services have been able to reach a wider audience and are regularly discussing ways to help these folks become more connected with our church community. For much of the year we continued to hold online Connections Info Sessions, though in September and November we were able to offer these gatherings in-person. We received 29 new church members in 2021, a slight increase over 2020, but still down significantly from 2019 due to COVID. In 2021—as in 2020—the Membership Committee coordinated two Every Member Calling Campaigns to check in on Church members’ well-being and offer support. A new initiative we began at the start of 2021 was the Old South Microcommunities, a collection of small groups of 4-5 people that engage each week around a particular discussion question. During this first iteration of the Old South Microcommunities we had 45 participants.

## **Congregational Care & Support**

The Congregational Care & Support Team has been providing connection, resources and encouragement to the Old South community throughout the year. I want to especially acknowledge and thank the Card Crew and Crew Coordinator Caroline Murray. Having personally been on the receiving end of this ministry when Rosie was born, I have a new appreciation of this generous outpouring of care. I also want to say a special thank you to Rich Hassinger who stepped back from facilitating the Caregivers Support Group after many years of leadership. This group, along with Healing Worship (thank you Ken) provide connection and peace for many of our community members. We are looking to re-launch the Caregivers Support Group in 2022 and are looking for participants. You can always reach the Care & Support Team at [care@oldsouth.org](mailto:care@oldsouth.org).

In the fall, as Amo’s Pastoral Residency came to a close, my responsibilities at Old South shifted a bit. While I maintain my role with the Membership Committee and Christians in Formation, I have stepped away from our Care & Support Team to focus my attention on the Service & Outreach Committee. While pastoral care will always be a part of what I do, I am very pleased that Helen McCrady and our Seminarian Jess Young Chang will now be staff leads for the Care & Support Committee. They join the amazing Karen Hand in coordinating this outreach. Thank you all. The encouragement and compassion this committee provides is invaluable in the life of our church. I have also stepped away from the Members in Discernment Committee and Shawn and Nancy are taking the lead there.

## **Christian Service & Outreach**

In October I began to staff the Christian Service & Outreach Committee. The committee was deeply into the process of selecting grantees for the year and I was excited to learn about the intentionality with which they conducted their work. As Caitlin and Phil note in the Christian Service & Outreach annual report, the committee added a stronger focus on organizations whose leadership had lived experience as part of the community they served, and organizations led by and supporting communities of color. After deep consideration and conversation the committee selected two new grantees: Fathers’ Uplift and Alternatives for Community and Environment. We look forward to sharing more about these organizations with the congregation in the coming months.

## **Greater Boston Interfaith Organization**

Along with joining the Christian Service & Outreach Committee, I am now staffing Old South’s GBIO Core Team. Following a massive campaign of listening sessions in the Spring of 2021, GBIO established legislative priorities and voted to approve a platform that focuses on four areas for the next few years: affordable housing, public housing deferred maintenance, reentry services for returning citizens, and mental health and substance use disorder services. I look forward to working with the Core Team, led by Co-Liaisons Mercedes Ridao and Ashton Goodfield. Our goal for 2022 is to strengthen the Core Team and engage more of the congregation in the work of GBIO.

## Climate Crisis Task Force

The Old South Climate Crisis Task Force has been hard at work throughout 2021. I direct your attention to the Task Force's annual report for a fuller picture, but will note a few highlights. In January we offered a Forum on Socially Responsible Investing and we finalized our application to reach Level 3 of the SNEUCC Environmental Ministries Team's Green Congregation Challenge. We did reach Level 3, but the EMT has now added a Level 4 category so we will work towards this in 2022. On March 26, 2021 Gov. Charlie Baker signed into law an *"Act creating a next-generation roadmap for Massachusetts climate policy,"* a piece of legislation our Task Force had been advocating for over the last two years. Over the summer we launched a congregation-wide survey called *"Small Steps to a Healthy Planet"* which helped to stimulate some wonderful engagement and led to a series of Google Forum topic discussions. On October 3, 2021, Old South hosted "Love. Earth. Justice: A Multifaith Service of Prayer, Celebration and Resolve" organized by MA Interfaith Power and Light and featuring a reflection by Rev. Traci Blackmon.

During 2021 we saw a few of our major Task Force leaders step away. I want to give major recognition to Carol Boggs who has been a part of Old South's climate work for many years. Carol is always up on the latest in climate legislation and is one of our most active advocates. She has also helped to guide both the Climate Communications WG and Steering Committee since we began. Thank you Carol for your organization, commitment and deep passion for this work. We also said goodbye to John Lape (a member of the Climate Justice and Advocacy WG) and Mary Ann Lape, who served as the Chair of the Task Force and as such participated in each working group. Thank you so much, especially to Mary Ann who helped get the Task Force on its feet, kept everything running smoothly, and encouraged us to lean into a vision of all that the Climate Crisis Task Force could become. As 2021 came to a close the Climate Crisis Task Force has taken a step back to do some assessment and evaluation. Thank you to the current members of our Steering Committee: Rich Hassinger, Neil Miller, Bev Hanna, and Shayna Gleason. In 2022 we hope to build congregational engagement, partner with other faith communities and organizations, and strengthen our commitment to environmental justice.

## On a Personal Note

This year has brought a significant change to my home-life as we welcomed the birth of our daughter Rosalie in September. Thank you so much to the whole congregation who have welcomed her so warmly, and to the staff who helped fill in for me when I took time away for maternity leave. It's been a real gift to get to enjoy these earliest months with baby Rosie and I look forward to introducing her to you all in 2022.

In many ways this past year has been a real slog, but I am so grateful for my clergy and staff colleagues who have adapted, pulled together, supported one another and helped pave a way forward for us all. John, Elias, Ozo, Richard and David show such care for our building. Corey gives the warmest welcome and keeps everyone connected and on the same page with the e-news and bulletin. Alex has been a welcome addition to the team by providing vitally important administrative support, and—of course—Helen is always two steps ahead, empowering the work of Old South in ways big and small. A huge thank you to Jamie who has—once again—had one of the most challenging roles this year, leaning into new technologies and providing the online experience that is helping us stay connected in this difficult time. Thank you also to William for the communications support. Much appreciation goes to our musicians who have gifted us with their ministry of beauty and remained flexible through the ups and downs of COVID. Thank you to Martha, who continues to nurture our young adult community, inspire our youth and challenges us all to consider new ways of being church together.

My loudest shout-out for the year must go to Kate, who not only organized double Church School (in online, in-person outside and hybrid formats), and adapted on a dime with the changing COVID landscape, but also offered steady support and encouragement to the parents of our congregation who have faced such challenges this year (including myself). Kate also stepped up to help us rethink hybrid worship and the technology needed, and she played



a huge role in the transformation of the Old South Preschool. One major highlight of this year was celebrating the ordination of Rev. Amo Ngoepe. I know we will all miss Amo as she moves on from her Pastoral Residency into her new role as Pastor. We have been gifted so much by her presence, her voice in worship, her leadership of Christian Service & Outreach and (G)RACE Speaks, and her encouragement as we work as a congregation to become more actively Anti-racist. Thank you also to Shawn who continues to help us craft beautiful worship experiences and who has shown true leadership in supervising our Seminarians and supporting our Members in Discernment. Finally, words can not express my gratitude to Nancy for all she has done, not only to see us through yet another difficult year, but for all she has done as Senior Pastor of Old South over these last 17 years. Her wisdom, encouragement, organizational genius and heart have not only helped Old South to thrive in her tenure, but have led us to dream more for ourselves than we otherwise could've imagined. I am so grateful to be learning from her—and from the rest of this staff—every single day.

I said it last year and I say it again: I don't think we could've made it through this year and emerged as strong and resilient as we have without the contributions of any one of these individual people. And I know we couldn't have done it without all of you—this whole congregation. Your support of one another and of our staff, your willingness to roll with the punches, and your commitment to continue growing as individuals and as a community is truly to be celebrated. Thank GOD for YOU!

Respectfully submitted,

*Katherine Schofield*



# Acting Associate Minister

## Summary

One year ago—at our annual meeting—I began to feel the side effects of my first COVID-19 vaccination shot received the day before. Now, I am writing this report in early January 2021 while recovering from a breakthrough case. What a wild year this has been for us all. Still, the fact that I am writing this from my home and not the hospital shows how far we have come. 2021 has been a rich year for our ministry. More than anything, we learned the value of versatility. I am so proud of the way that Old South Church has carried on through this crisis. Please accept this report as a litany of thanksgiving for all the ways this church has moved in the ways of innovation, courage, and God’s loving spirit. I offer this report in thanksgiving for vaccines and you!



## Worship

Worship remained unchanged from the end of 2020 through the start of 2021. That is, we remained remote. From January through August, as vaccines were becoming more widely available in the United States, we stayed the course. Worship leaders individually recorded their worship segments and then submitted them to either Jamie Garuti, William Wei, or myself for editing.

On February 17, we observed Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent with two services (one on Zoom and one on livestream.) Since we could not safely administer ashes in-person, worshipers were invited to find something to use as their ‘marking agent’ such as a spice, dirt, or make up. We marked one year of COVID-19 in mid-March with a service of remembrance and healing. Together we gave thanks to God for keeping us bound during a turbulent time. A second year of remote Holy Week services arrived; this time we added additional Zoom services which gave an opportunity for handwashing and communion. On the Saturday before Palm Sunday, Kate Nintcheu and I handed out palms to Old South members and friends outside of the church.



*The July-August Watch Parties were fun ways to worship together—in-person and online!*

By May, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention gave permission for vaccinated individuals to return to their lives with no restriction. Recognizing staff exhaustion and the challenges of reopening, we decided to hold All Church Worship watch parties during July and August with a few in-person Jazz Worship services. We began to plan for a full return of in-person services and programming starting after Labor Day.

By late summer, the Delta variant swept through New England and dashed our hopeful plans. We instituted a mask-mandate and decided to collapse our Sunday services into one in-person All-Church Worship service and continue our weekly Jazz Worship service. During the fall, we saw our in-person attendance numbers start to climb. Each week the congregation was more full. In mid-October we held back to back Marathon Sunday worship services as Boston again hosted our beloved

Marathon. By Thanksgiving, we filled the Old South Meeting House with our hymns of joy and praise.

As the Season of Advent began, the Omicron variant burst into our lives, which changed our plans again. Instead of our planned three in-person Christmas Eve services, we shifted and held one live-streamed service without a congregation. Clergy and choir led the service while worshipers tuned in from the safety of their homes.

What a year.

## Project (P)REACH

At the start of the new year it was clear that we needed to begin to plan for an upgraded livestream system that would be ready for the return of in-person worship. In January, Jamie Garuti and I met with a dozen congregations

across the country who (previous to the pandemic) were known to have high quality systems. Educated with their experiences, we began to seek proposals from several live-streaming outfits for the installation of cameras and screens to enable hybrid worship.

We affectionately referred to this project as (P)REACH because we knew that having this capability means many things: not the least of which is the spreading of our unique, progressive Christian voice into regions of our world that so desperately need it. With this technology, Old South's reach would be limitless. John Braught, Helen McCrady, Nancy Taylor, and Mitchell Crawford joined the team in sifting through proposals.

After meeting with three companies, we decided to hire Revelation—a Worcester based company. Church Council approved the funds which provided PTZ (Pan, Tilt, Zoom) cameras in the Sanctuary, Gordon Chapel, and Mary Norton Hall, as well as retractable screens in both worship spaces for children's messages, guest sermons, etc.

The installation of this project has been difficult. We have faced the challenges of supply chains and a company that was stretched thin. Still, what Jamie Garuti and her team has done is nothing short of a minor miracle. Yes, we need to improve the sound and a few other odds and ends. But we are now able to beautifully broadcast from our sanctuary. Our online attendance has held firm. We have not lost any of our remote viewers and many local folks continue to watch from home. The chat feature continues to be a wonderful source of community.

## Seminarian



*Jessica Young Chang 2021—2022  
Seminarian*

In September of 2020, we welcomed second-year Harvard Divinity School student Thomas Mitchell to the virtual chancel. Thomas was the first virtual seminarian in our 351 year history! Thomas is a gifted worship leader, a wise teacher, and a brilliant colleague. Thomas served as part of the Jazz Coffee House leadership team, led our Jazz Social Hour, and was the staff liaison for our Climate Crisis work. We said 'Godspeed' to Thomas on Labor Day weekend.

In September of 2021, we welcomed third-year Harvard Divinity School student Jessica Young Chang to our physical chancel! Jess is a confident worship leader and is so keen to learn. She is a trusted colleague. Jess is part of the Jazz Worship team, leads Sunday Bible Study, and is planning to start a small group for women in 2022.

In 2021, I began a course with Harvard Divinity School required of all seminarian supervisors.

## Formation

The 'Through the Bible' study series continues its journey through scripture two chapters at a time. In January 2021, we began our sojourn through the Book of Job. This was a timely study on suffering and isolation. We completed our study at the end of the program year and took a break for summer. In September, we began our study of the Book of Psalms.

In February, I was honored to take part in leading City Mission's Virtual Pilgrimage to Montgomery. This was a two month journey during which we met twice a week to explore and discuss issues of race and white supremacy.

In 2021, we saw the relaunch of the LGBTQIA+ and Friends group. In June, we hosted a Pride Service during which we gave the Open Door Award to Bishop Yvette Flunder. In addition, we hosted a special virtual happy hour to celebrate pride. In September, we held our first in-person meet and greet and in December we hosted a Christmas cookie decoration party with the Old South Youth Group.

## Leadership and the Work of the Church

Along with the meetings that all clergy attend together (Church Council, Board of Deacons, Leadership Committee and Membership Committee), I have attended meetings of the COVID-19 Taskforce, G(RACE) Speaks, and many meetings devoted to technology and communication. These meetings are key moments of connection during this virtual season.

In 2021, I joined the Metropolitan Boston Association Board as their scribe. In addition to monthly meetings, I oversaw the following Ecclesiastical Councils: Karlene Griffiths Sekou (February 2), Lexi Boudreaux (April 22), Megan Berkowitz (June 7), Domenick Ackerman (September 8). I also attended the Ordination of Lexi Boudreaux at United Parish Brookline on October 24 and Domenick Ackerman at First Church Cambridge on November 14.

To celebrate the ministry of June Cooper at City Mission, I served on her retirement celebration committee. We celebrated her retirement on June 19.

### **Gratitude**

I extend my deepest gratitude to my colleagues who have made ministry rich and fruitful during this challenging year: Nancy Taylor, Jamie Garuti, Kate Nintcheu, Helen McCrady, Katherine Schofield, Amo Ngoepe, Mitchell Crawford, John Braught, David Story, Linda Van Praet, Willie Sordillo, June Cooper, Don Wells, Jessica Young Chang, Howard Cha Young Kim, Alex Pickering, George Sargeant, Corey Spence, Elias Perez, Richard Serebour, Ozo Nwodo, David Brode, Martha Schick, Emily Ross, Summer Marsh, Peter Coulombe, and Tim Harbold.

What a year.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Shawn M Fiedler*

# Pastoral Resident



My time at Old South has been a time for many seasons under the sun, all made beautiful in time. I keep saying, my time here has been more than I could have ever expected or imagined, and I am filled with love and gratitude. I have grown and learnt so much about myself, about Christian ministry, about humanity's beauty and sweetness that you all have illumined to me.

I remember my first day at Old South. Elias welcomed me as I stored my things in the Old South basement, as I looked for a place to stay. Nancy welcomed me with an earpiece. There began the journey to finding my literal and figurative voice. I settled into Jamaica Plain, bumped into many warm Old Southerners smiles on the bus, in the streets, at coffee shops.

2021 is a year that will forever be held dearly in my heart. It has been tumultuous, and yet joyous and life-giving. It is the year I passed my Ecclesiastical Council, the year I received my first official pastoral call to All Souls Bethlehem Church, the year of my ordination. It is also the year I transitioned from the Urban Pastoral Ministry Program, and Old South and City Mission so generously extended my visa to enable me to explore work prospects; for your visioning and offering I am forever grateful.

## Committees

Our committees got a lot of work done. Tracy, Deb, June and all of (G)RACE Speaks had great successes with Black History Month, the Open Door award with Byron Rushing, as well as the anti-racism curriculum training. Their work continues to be a beacon of hope and justice.

Caitlin Callahan and Phil Dearing have built on Marie Hurd's fantastic work and leadership with Christian Service & Outreach. They worked hard to incorporate congregational participation as we selected new grantees from a list of 22, while also ensuring marginalized communities were prioritized. It's been hard work, and the committee did it!

## GBIO

GBIO started the year with listening sessions which many committees and small groups participated in, hearing from over 70 Old Southerners. Mercedes Ridao and Ashton Goodfield stepped into the role of GBIO liaisons, both bringing deep and rich experiences, and Thomas Ruffen stepped in as the new organizer supporting Old South, a truly inspiring team!

## Snowden High School and Small Groups

Snowden is deeply enriched by the presence of Ralph Watson, who always goes above and beyond, and his loving commitment ensures students are mentored, have proper school supplies at the start of the school year and so much more. The Sunday Bible Study became a sacred space of communal support as the Biblical texts carried us through the pandemic week by week. The small group, A Safe Space for All Colors, continued to be a loving safe space, keeping people connected as some transitioned to New Jersey, Los Angeles and Hawaii.

## City Mission

At City Mission, the year started off with UPMP leadership transitioning as Darrell Hamilton received a call to my home church, Middle Collegiate Church in New York, and Cheryl Harris stepped in as the director of the program. These six months were all about transitions, as City Mission also prepared for June Cooper's retirement. Dylan Hillerbrand, our program manager, moved to Canada to pursue music studies, Jamie Mangiameli stayed at AME New Roots as Executive Minister, Jana Dye from First Baptist Jamaica Plain accepted an interim call at College Park Baptist Church in North Carolina and Debbie Duval from Fourth Presbyterian Church accepted a call to High Street Congregational Church in Maine. City Mission had a farewell party for June and we also had a COVID safe retreat to bid each other farewell, forever grateful to City Mission for pioneering with this Lily Foundation grant and offering many of us a chance to learn and grow in ministry.

## **Worship**

Worship at Old South has continued even as we transitioned from virtual, to watch parties, and to hybrid in-person. We transitioned together as a team and it was deeply moving to see the support from each person.

## **Staff**

My colleagues at Old South were my cornerstone. Don Wells stepped in as I needed a new advisor to support me towards my Ecclesiastical Council. Nancy Taylor has provided unwavering support in my candidating process, and the overall uncertainty that 2021 brought forth. Shawn Fiedler was able to turn things around quickly and organized the most incredible ordination ever. My officemates Fran Froelich and Georgia Mattison of the Poor People's United Fund taught me about the socio-economic realities of Boston. Mitchell, George, and the choir, your musical prowess always, I still get sent the recording of the Old South Choir singing "Akheko ofana no Jesu" from my family and friends—they were deeply touched and moved by this thoughtful and generous offering. And to all my colleagues Helen, Jess, Richard, Ozo, Kate, Jamie, Katherine, William, Corey, John, Alex, Linda, David, Ken, Zoe, Doug, Willie: Thank you all for your comradeship, and your generous and gracious presence and support always.

Old South, you will all forever be etched beautifully in my heart, and our memories and experiences will forever live on. And my family thank you all for your continued love and support. My visa process will take longer than expected, so I will be going home to South Africa in the interim, with hopes to be back in New York. If you are ever in New York or South Africa, please do not hesitate to reach out, I would love to be in communion! My email address is [amo.ngoepe@gmail.com](mailto:amo.ngoepe@gmail.com).

One thing I desire, this is what I seek, that I may dwell in the house of God all the days of my life.

Respectfully submitted,

*Amo Ngoepe*



# Minister of Music



In reflecting upon 2021, it seems the year was rather neatly divided between spring and fall semesters: where the former shows the program still confined to virtual offerings, produced for Old South's All Church Virtual Worship, the latter saw us begin to emerge from the pandemic—and conveyed something of the program's resilience. In between, the summer months functioned as a transitional time, allowing us to close down the virtual production apparatus we'd built up over the previous year and prepare again for in-person services. While the resumption of live worship was a source of great elation among participants, the services to which we returned occupied a middle ground between pandemic and pre-pandemic. The resulting compromise, All Church Worship, placed some strictures around how and what we could achieve, yet I would not describe our output during this period as constrained. Rather, through all the many shifting paradigms and changing circumstances, the remarkable individuals who make up Old South's music program

displayed uncommon grace and commitment, making possible the high level of worship to which the Old South community is accustomed.

The year began with meetings among the Music Ministry's program leaders to assess needs and to solicit feedback. During the early months of the calendar, production of new content for Virtual Worship primarily utilized Old South's Choral Fellows, who recorded on a weekly basis; the Old South Ringers, Gospel Choir, and Festival Choir contributed new music to worship on about a once-per-month basis. The efforts of the Willie Sordillo Ensemble are heroic by comparison: the ensemble created multiple new recordings for Old South's Virtual Jazz Coffeehouse most every week—a staggering achievement by any standard, and even more admirable with an understanding of the byzantine nature of the process by which the content was created.

Because music ministry contributions to All Church Virtual Worship were less frequent than would otherwise have been the case, it was important to convey something of our ministry priorities with each one. As an example, both anthems recorded by the Festival Choir during the Epiphany and Lenten seasons were works by African-American composers, and during May—Asian and Pacific American Heritage Month—hymns produced reflected the New Century Hymnal's many entries from Asian traditions and sources. Women composers were similarly highlighted, including in a recording of Libby Larson's "Fanfare for the Women" made by Old South Brass member Mary-Lynne Bohn. Other highlights from this period of pre-recorded offerings include a series of four-hand piano pieces (featuring my colleague Kevin Neel, formerly of Emmanuel Church, Boston), as well as a recording of festive music for two trumpets and organ included in this year's virtual Easter service.

As we began to pivot toward in-person worship toward the close of the summer, I was delighted to participate in Old South's All Church Worship Watch Parties—a bridge between All Church Virtual Worship and the hybrid All Church Worship which succeeded it. The Old South Ringers and Festival Choir both resumed regular, in-person rehearsal the week following Labor Day, with Gospel Choir returning shortly thereafter. Because of the ongoing risk associated with the pandemic, Old South instituted several risk mitigation policies during this period. These included requiring all music ensemble participants to be fully vaccinated, requiring masks for all indoor activities (including singing), social



*Old South was happy to return to the chancel.*

distancing in both rehearsal and worship, and the utilization of multiple rehearsal spaces (within a single setting) to avoid aerosol particle saturation in any one space.

As during the previous era of virtual worship, the return to in-person services allowed us to use repertoire selections to highlight our ministry priorities and the range of the program. As examples, the first 5 weeks following Labor Day saw the choir in performances of standards from the musical theatre repertory, selections from classical oratorio, world music, gospel music, and music which spoke explicitly to the Christian anti-racist imperative. The months that followed showed the music program to great effect in a number of seasonal

highlights, including a rare fall “Marathon” Sunday (deferred from Spring), our performance of John Rutter’s *Requiem* on All Saints’ Sunday — accompanied by a chamber ensemble which included Old South’s own Sam Ou and Amy Budka — and at Meetinghouse Sunday, which showcased the return of the Old South Brass and the premier of my own adaptation of Aaron Copland’s “The Promise of Living” for piano four-hands and brass.

At the close of a wonderful fall semester, COVID-19 infection rates began a steep climb, propelled by the highly contagious Omicron variant. The rise in new cases necessitated changes to both Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve events: our three planned-for Christmas Eve services were condensed to a single offering, live-streamed at 6 p.m., with only choir and worship leaders present in the sanctuary. A similar format was utilized on New Year’s Eve for our First Night Concert: musicians and tech crew were in the Old South Sanctuary; the single concert was live-streamed to a fully remote audience.

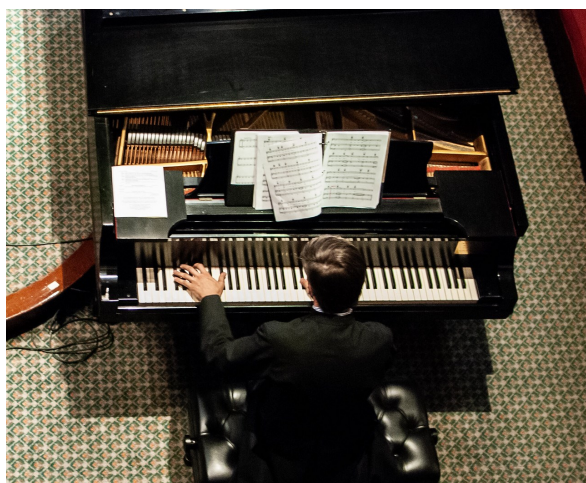
### Honoring Harry Huff

November marked the fifth year since Harry Huff’s untimely passing, and it felt important to observe that anniversary in a variety of ways. Harry and his enduring legacy at Old South were celebrated during a “Scared for Good” Halloween organ concert on October 31st, which concluded with an offering to support Young Organist initiatives through the Boston Chapter of the American Guild of Organists in Harry’s memory. The concert raised close to \$1,500. In addition, our Marathon and All Saints services, as well as our First Night concert, all contained elements of tribute to Harry.

### Library and Instruments

The first half of 2021 saw continuation of work on the church’s music library, especially the holdings in the music office itself. Over several months, brass and instrumental music was systematically relocated from the undercroft to built-in shelving in the music office. Concurrently, we moved some redundant material from the office into temporary storage in the undercroft. Ultimately, we will winnow these ancillary materials down, as most are suitable for deaccession. This fall, the music library was outfitted with a network-ready desktop computer and printer, making it possible to access both choral and instrumental music catalogs without leaving the space. We have our excellent Administrator, Helen, to thank for facilitating this technological upgrade. Conversion of the music library into a more efficient work environment is ongoing, but the amount of reorganization and consolidation accomplished over the past year has been significant.

As in any year, there is plenty to report with regard to Old South’s remarkable collection of instruments. Restoration work continues on the Skinner Organ located in the Sanctuary, and this year we



*Top to Bottom: Mitchell Crawford and George Sargeant, Jamie Chelel and Connor Vigeant perform at “Scared for Good”, Old South Brass perform virtually on New Year’s Eve, Mitchell playing on Old South’s Steinway Model D Grand.*



undertook a major project to address deficiencies in its Gallery division (located in the rear of the sanctuary, in the balcony). The mechanism of this section, provided new in 1983, suffered from split, dry wood, leading to pipes sounding at random without any key being depressed. It was decided to replace this mechanism with something both more space-efficient and long lasting. The project was entrusted to the Schantz Organ Company of Orville, Ohio, who removed the pipes and old mechanism in June 2021. All aspects of this project should be complete by March, 2022. Beyond the mechanical improvements already detailed, the project has permitted a rethinking of this division more generally, leading to improved access and safety in this high-up location, particularly for reaching pipes of the horizontal copper trumpet, which before could only be reached by erecting scaffolding.

With regard to the Chapel organ, one unusual event occurred in 2021, when some notes in the west chamber started sounding by themselves. Our curator discovered minor water damage, caused by a leaking drainpipe from the bathroom just above. The leak was fixed immediately, and the necessary organ repairs made. As a precaution against any future leakage, the organ team built and affixed a catchpan directly above the pipes, which diverts water away from the pipes and mechanisms.

Certain of Old South's pianos were also the beneficiaries of restorative work in 2021. The key bushings on the Sanctuary's Model D concert grand were replaced in May, and its special two-seater ("duet") bench repaired at the close of the year. In addition, the key bushings on the Steinway upright piano in the Music Office were replaced in August, and a new fabric grill cover installed.

### Children's Music

It was with regret Old South received the resignation of Amy Budka, Children's Music leader, on March 31. For Amy, this was a well-earned retirement which coincided with her retirement from the Bedford Public School system; nevertheless, it must be said that Old South is losing a talented and creative children's music leader. I've so appreciated getting to know and work with Amy, and admit feeling disappointed the pandemic got in the way of our seeing each other as much as we otherwise would have. However, in this retirement, a silver lining: Amy, a trained percussionist, is now more easily able to jump in when we have additional needs, and we were grateful for her presence on Marathon, All Saints, and Meetinghouse Sundays.

—*Mitchell Crawford*

### The Willie Sordillo Ensemble

At Jazz Worship, we entered 2021 with a continuation of recording our services remotely, from our homes. Our ongoing ensemble of Zoë Krohne, Doug Rich, Erez Dessel and Willie Sordillo was joined by David Hunte, Gary Lapow and Michael Patterson in the ensuing months for guest appearances. Their contributions allowed us to introduce more variety to our repertoire and arrangements, and gave us the possibility of collaborating with musicians who live in distant parts of the country — one of the silver linings of socially distanced music-making! In June, we took a break from our demanding recording schedule and re-played videos of songs we had recorded over the preceding 15 months for summer services, while offering live, outdoor worship once in each month of June, July and August (though inclement weather brought us unexpectedly inside for one of those)!



*A socially distant Jazz Ensemble returned in-person to the Sanctuary in September.*

We welcomed the long-anticipated return of live, in-person worship in the sanctuary on a regular basis in September. While gathering for worship with a live congregation and live musicians helped reconnect us as a community, the changes mandated by COVID-19 posited some challenges for us to overcome. First, as Erez had moved out of the area during the pandemic, we no longer had a regular pianist, and have resumed calling on a number of other

pianists and guitarists to join the ensemble as available. We also invested in new sound equipment and learned how to adapt it to the hybrid nature of our services, as we found what sounds good in the Sanctuary itself may not translate to good sound over the internet. We also learned how hard it is to sing and play a saxophone through a mask! Those challenges largely met, we look forward to returning the major portion of our focus to worship and musical matters rather than the distraction of technology as we enter 2022.

—Willie Sordillo, Director

## Gospel Choir

Undeterred by the pandemic, the Old South Church Gospel Choir embraced the challenge of virtual choir work during the first half of the year. Our soloists Sayida Rivers and Jordan Pettis graciously recorded not only solo tracks but also lead vocal tracks for the other choir members to follow in their recordings. Director Tim Harbold took on the new role of music technician, assembling and editing both video and audio for all the Gospel Choir pieces. Highlights included a collaboration with (G)RACE Speaks on Joshua Campbell's "Sing Out, March On" for Martin Luther King Sunday; a collaboration with the Old South Festival Choir and youth of the church on "Seasons of Love" to mark the one-year point of the pandemic; and "This Is Me" for Pride Sunday.



*A socially distance Gospel Choir singing at the Jazz Worship Service*

Though challenging, one silver lining of the remote work was the ability to welcome new members whose in-person schedules normally conflicted with the choir's schedule. Another silver lining was the opportunity to sing more frequently at Sunday worship. Returning to in-person singing in the fall was a joy and a relief. With Mitchell Crawford's support, the Gospel Choir has continued to sing more frequently at Sunday worship, while also singing as usual at Jazz Worship, and has enjoyed welcoming Herbert Jones as a guest soloist, with hopes that his role may continue into the future.

—Tim Harbold, Director

## Old South Ringers Handbell Choir

The Old South Ringers had a very good year overall. In the winter and spring, the Ringers continued their pre-recorded contributions to the online worship experience. Not only were more members of Old South exposed to our handbell music and ministry, but many of the Ringers' recordings were picked up by other worshipping communities, allowing the Old South handbell program to touch a far greater audience than we otherwise could have reached. In the fall, the Ringers saw a significant increase in their membership thanks to several new members joining and due to the return of several members who had taken a leave during the first year of the pandemic. The Ringers continued their monthly contributions to worship and were especially pleased to be able to host their annual Christmas concert again. A new feature of the Christmas concert this year was the livestreaming of the event, which more than doubled the 'live' audience and which provided a way for those who could not attend at the moment to watch the recorded concert at a later time.



*The Old South Ringers at Meeting House Sunday*

—Peter Coulombe, Director

# Theologian in Residence



Let me say, yet again, what a privilege and a joy it is to serve as Theologian in Residence for yet another year; a position I have held since the fall of 2008. I trust that my contributions have helped further our theological understandings both on the personal level as well as our witness in the public square.

2021 continued to be a strange and challenging year to do ministry in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The in-person dimension of our ministries was severely limited especially at the beginning of the year. Nonetheless, we have carried out our ministries in as creative a manner as was possible under our Senior Minister's guidance and a talented and hard-working staff.

The underlying premise from which I work is that our faith journey is not primarily about belief but about following Jesus. As we follow, we learn and grow. Any faith articulation that might emerge comes only as we follow. Thus our faith commitments, both the inward and outward dimensions, are always in process. And more often than not, there is an 'edge' to it. This was especially true this past year as we stood for God's justice in the midst of hatred and mistrust fostered by our former president, including the act of sedition by many of his followers who stormed the Capitol on January 6<sup>th</sup>. Our faith has much to say about loving our neighbor as ourselves and about doing justice. As I have noted before, the late biblical scholar Marcus Borg placed no credence in such expressions as "I Love God" or "I love Jesus". He suggests that the real question is "do we love what God loves?" Loving what God loves includes the poor, the marginalized and the disinherited. He further suggested that we need to "live God's passion", and that passion is concerned about liberation from all oppressive systems: personal, political and economic. That is our calling as we look forward to 2022.

My 2021 calendar year Included:

## Education

I continue to convene the Theological Book Group which meets Monday evenings via Zoom. The books we read create an impressive list: *Between the World and Me*, by Ta-Nehise Coates; *Sermon of the Mount* by Amy-Jill Levine; *Bone Black* by bell hooks; *Dusk, Night Dawn: On Renewal and Courage* by Anne Lamott; *Freeing Jesus: Rediscovering Jesus as Friend, Teacher, Savior, Lord, Way and Promise*, by Diana Butler Bass; and *Light of the World* (Advent Texts) by Amy-Jill Levine.

Each of these books challenged us as they addressed important issues in our journey of faith. The group numbers between 20-22 participants with each engaging the text and one another in spirited and insightful discussion. I am blessed to be part of this group.

## Mentoring

It has been a privilege to have been the Ministerial Advisor to several Old South members over the years as they worked their way through the Ordination process in our United Church of Christ. Currently I am the advisor to Martha Schick, a third-year student at Boston University School of Theology. She is well on her way to completing the process within the next six months or so. I was also pleased to be the late-stage Ministerial Advisor to Amo Ngoepe, through the New York Conference of the UCC, leading to her wonderful service of Ordination on December 12<sup>th</sup>. We are blessed to have such talented and faith-filled people preparing to take leadership roles in the UCC. I am delighted to be part of their journey.

## Worship and Related Events

Prayers and related liturgies help shape our faith development and I am always glad for the opportunity to participate. I was pleased to preach on the First Sunday of Advent and then a couple of week later to lead the Ordination Prayer for Amo Ngoepe's Ordination Service. I eagerly look forward to the Imposition of Ashes, on Ash Wednesday 2022, outside on Boylston St., cancelled in 2021 due to COVID-19.

On Sunday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, following Morning Worship, I led our annual “**Advent and Christmas Poetry Fest**”, both in-person and livestreamed, where Old Southerners read prose selections or poems to help prepare us for Advent and the coming Christmas season. This year’s event included a musical presentation, with voice and guitar, of a song / poem for the season. Now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year, it is always a special event.

### **Connections Classes**

I have assisted Interim Associate Minister Katherine Schofield with several such classes, where prospective members can learn more about Old South Church, the United Church of Christ, and have opportunity to ask questions as to the ministry of the church and ways they can become involved. These are wonderful occasions for thoughtful discussion.

### **Area Clergy Leadership**

I continue to convene the Central Boston Clergy Group, all via Zoom in 2021, bringing together clergy from a dozen or so faith communities including Protestant and Roman Catholic churches and a Jewish Temple. The conversations relate to issues we all face as we seek to do ministry in today’s world including clergy self-care, concern for our unhoused neighbors, the insidious nature of White Supremacy, and the need to address the issue of reparations. Indeed, much to discuss at several levels as we look forward to 2022.

Indeed, great challenges await us here at Old South as we move into 2022, including the upcoming retirement of our Senior Minister, Nancy Taylor. But whether the issues we face are personal, institutional, theological or societal, the prophetic tradition based on Jesus’ call to follow him is what both beckons us and sustains us. I am pleased to be part of this ongoing journey.

Respectfully submitted,

*Don Wells*



# Theologian in the City



*“Speak up, speak out, get in the way. Get into good trouble, necessary trouble and help redeem the soul of America.”*

*John Lewis, Civil Rights leader and Democratic Congressman*

In 2021, as the country continued to grapple with the global pandemic and a renewed social justice movement, my ministry unfolded in two arenas.

First, I was so grateful to take on more responsibilities within our community. I co-facilitated a grief support group for persons of color with the Reverend Dr. Ken Orth. The group focused on supporting one another to navigate grief and loss through the lens of faith and prayer. This important work strengthens our faith and longing to trust and place our hope in God’s matchless love and faithfulness. My activities increased as I assisted with worship while Reverend Katherine Schofield was on parental leave. What a joy it was to welcome the congregation

back into the Sanctuary for worship on September 19. After physically being apart from one another for almost 18 months, greeting one another by bumping elbows was a good and safe substituted for handshakes and hugs. And that was good enough for now!

## Mass & Cass

In early fall, in partnership with Boston Warm, we made a commitment to address the unfolding humanitarian crisis on the corners of Massachusetts Avenue and Melnea Cass Boulevard in Boston’s South End. The encampment of over 1,000+ unhoused persons in one of the wealthiest cities in the world called us to speak up and out about this crisis which has festered since the closing of the Long Island Bridge in 2015 and long-standing structural inequalities.

Since October we have engaged over forty faith leaders representing twenty congregations in bi-weekly meetings. We convened an unprecedented series of listening sessions bring together persons with lived experience, medical and shelter providers, housing advocates to illuminate our understanding of what has been referred to as “Mass and Cass.”

In late November, we established an organization called ***Faith Leaders for Housing Justice***. We believe that every person deserves the right and dignity of having a safe and secure roof over their head.

One of our goals is to equip congregations to ignite a ministry of presence to those suffering through housing crises. Collaborating with organizations, institutions and public agencies, we seek to share a prophetic voice to engage congregations in the work of creating housing justice. Our hope is that we will offer housed and unhoused persons opportunities and spaces for people to discover mutuality in service and mission. When we get to know people who are vulnerable, we are challenged to take more seriously the power, opportunities and blessings we have.

It is only with the support of this beloved congregation that this work is possible. My heart is grateful to each of you for caring, compassion and love of God’s people and God’s justice. Thank you all for joining in the struggle for human liberation and dignity and your willingness to get into good necessary trouble.

We are all part of this turbulent and uncertain time, we all share in its potential for harm and for good, we are all participants in the struggle.

Respectfully submitted,

***The Reverend June R. Cooper***

*“There are no masses my friend  
only you and I  
pitching stones, swinging  
macheteds  
and uttering our silent prayers  
that are no masses  
just you and I  
separate wings of the same  
soaring eagle  
no masses, only you and I  
sojourners seeking truth.”*  
From —rophets for a New Day

# Healing Worship Minister



Old South Healing Worship continued to be held throughout 2021. We met 12 times, on the second Sunday of each month. Due to the COVID pandemic, we continued to meet on an online platform which the church hosted. Our time was changed to early Sunday afternoon to allow all to worship together at the 10 a.m. online Worship as well as participate in other Zoom offerings of Old South following that worship time.

This change meant we could continue to offer Healing Worship during this difficult time in the life of our congregation. It also meant that those who felt at risk of COVID due to lowered immune systems or age felt safe to join our time together. Our format allowed telephone connection to those who did not have the capacity to have a computer connection. It also allowed those who lived at a distance to join in our time together remotely.

We welcomed between eight and 15 people each month, offering a confidential space in which to bring our sorrows as well as our joys, our grief and suffering as well as our celebrations. We continued to attempt to offer a sanctuary of safety for all who gathered, wherever we found ourselves on our journey of faith in the pandemic. We spent some time in group silent prayer, practicing the reality: “silence gives us the opportunity to hear that which sound ordinarily obscures.” We listened for God’s loving reassurance of our place in the whole family of the creation. We welcomed one another in this Spirit, and “held the Christ light for each other,” while allowing God to be the healer of our minds, bodies, and spirits. We attempted to be steadfast witnesses for one another, practicing the reality of sacred speech and redemptive listening. We offered a place to be met in the shadows of our illnesses, our losses, our griefs, our betrayals, and our isolation as well as the joy of our healings, our restorations, and our reconciliations.

I was able to light candles for each person’s concerns and sharing. We asked for the light of Christ to guide us and saw all prayers offered as a part of our own life together in Christ. We reminded each other of God’s love for all, no matter the outer circumstances.

As Healing Worship Minister, I was also able to plan and offer with the Reverend June Cooper, Old South Theologian in the City, an eight-week “Grief Support Group” in the first three months of 2021. The pandemic and its reality of isolation in the midst of much grief and loss created a unique situation in which the communal aspects of grieving were cut off for many of our members and families. Old South offered this group as a way to gather in a safe on-line community to hear the scriptural promises of God and each other’s sacred stories and to offer one another redemptive listening, as God held us all in God’s great love, mercy, and compassion through times of desolation, praying for the consolation of gathering as “one body” in the Spirit of Christ.

Submitted with humility and gratitude,

***Reverend Dr. Ken Orth***

# Wedding Minister



The occasion of a wedding is always a cause for celebration with the couple as well as families and friends who come from all over to join in. Old South Church is fortunate to be a much sought after venue for these celebrations.

In 2021, we had fewer weddings than usual but still offered an extravagant welcome to twenty-three couples. As the Wedding Minister, I thought it would be good for you to know how this happens among so many restrictions due to COVID.

Normally I would meet with a couple at least three times in-person before the wedding. By then they have already met Helen and decided on Sanctuary or Chapel. But in 2021, I took their contact information from a spreadsheet and wrote a letter to them introducing myself as their wedding officiant and offering to set up a Zoom call at their convenience. So I have my three meetings with them

via Zoom and meet them for the first time face to face at the rehearsal. One of the questions I ask is for them to imagine some marriage that they were impressed by and why. Their answers to this question come up again on the wedding day. They also meet their musician and their wedding hostess, Karen Hand at this point. By then, in most cases, we are very well acquainted and greet each other like old friends.

Many times these couples have childhood ministers or friends that they would like to be a part of the wedding. Of course, we welcome all. It sounds like the beginning of a joke when I say, "A Franciscan Brother, an Episcopal priest, an Armenian Deacon, and a wedding minister at Old South Church met to officiate a wedding." But that was the case in one such wedding. I also assisted in a Coptic Egyptian wedding complete with incense and thrones for the couple.

One of my wedding couples brought an entire choir to sing. Another was a Greek ceremony where I crowned the bride and groom while a streamed choir sang in Arabic. We never ask why the couple is not using their own church for the ceremony but instead extend a warm welcome to Old South Church and remind them that they are precious creations of God.

Our statement of inclusivity on our website attracts many to us and I always get comments about how wonderful it is that we welcome everyone. One Catholic Priest officiant saw our inclusivity banner on the scaffolding and said to me, "I would join this church just on that basis."

During the ceremony I tell them that weddings are a holy, creation moment that they should take seriously. And when they exchange rings, I remind them of that marriage they were impressed by and that they are putting on an outward symbol that identifies them as a married couple. I challenge them to always be aware of that and to act in such a way that other people will want what they have.

Weddings during COVID are not ideal. Some have moved theirs into another year or cancelled all together. But those who stay the course, experience the grace and wonder of an inviting God at Old South Church. In every interaction, from Helen to Elias, Karen, Mitchell, George and myself we try to make sure that their wedding will always bring back warm memories. Thank you for this unique opportunity

Respectfully submitted,

*Reverend David Story*



*The wedding ministry at Old South is certainly a joyful one!*



# Director of Children & Family Ministries

Ministry is always best when it is tailored to one's context, and the context of 2021 was ever varying, never constant, and hard to predict. This was a challenging year, in part because of the extended fatigue that we as staff, and I personally, carried over from 2020. Then pair an exhausted staff with an ever changing context of public health concerns and the spiritual and mental health concerns of our congregation, and in many ways, 2021 was harder than 2020.



## Church School

**January – May:** We completed the 2020-2021 program year in the same manner that we had begun. Online Church school offerings for Preschool/Early Elementary, Older Elementary, and Middle Schoolers met at 9 a.m. on Sundays, and the Youth Group met at 11 a.m. with leaders Martha Schick and Jimmy Kamel. By May, our teachers had been supporting classes for 15 months straight—never stopping from March 2020 through May 2021. They were each so important to keeping our children connected and I cannot overstate my gratitude for them. These teachers were: Martha Schick, Youth and Youth Adult Leader (staff); Jimmy Kamel, Asst. Youth Leader; Rory Razon, Meet The Ancestors; Laura and Phillip Harris, Meet the Ancestors; Lucy Costa, Older Elementary GP (Godly Play); Lisa Mahnke, Older Elementary GP; Anna Utech, Older Elem GP; Erin Hull, PreK/ Early Elem GP; Rebecca Pasipanodya, PreK/ Early Elem GP; and Elizabeth Perry, PreK/ Early Elem GP (staff).

**June – August:** In light of the extreme dedication and strain that my volunteer teachers had been carrying for so long, in the context of vaccination rates rising and things opening up in the summer of 2021, and our expectations that families would want to be out in nature (and specifically out of their homes) as much as possible in the summer months—we did NOT program for classes to convene during June, July or August. Instead, I wrote 10 weeks of curriculum for families to do together on a Sunday morning (or whenever) that centered on the ministry and miracles of Jesus and involved many options for hands-on, active, and creative “work” for kids to choose from. These packets of curriculum were mailed to families in June and again in July. Every first Sunday was designated “Sunday Funday” and we encouraged families to get out and do something fun together.

In July our context changed again as we watched the new Delta variant arrive in Massachusetts with blazing fury. Our plan and expectation was to take it easy in the summer, to allow the teachers and myself to recover a bit, and to begin in-person church school in September 2021. This expectation was shattered by the beginning of August, when our Old South COVID-19 Blue Ribbon Task Force recommended that children's classes not be held inside at all, until further notice. I was able to negotiate them into allowing me to hold one childcare/nursery class for children two years and under during 10 a.m. All-Church Worship—with a limit of five children and several spread-mitigating factors in place. All my staff and volunteers were required to be fully vaccinated, mandatory mask wearing for all over age two, and increased airflow through open windows, fans, and our HVAC system.

I held a “Family Council” meeting in August via Zoom for our Church School families, which generated good will, ideas, and a willingness to think creatively. A follow-up survey was completed by 38 families (60% of families), the results showing that there was energy and interest behind ALL the options presented. After checking with my teaching staff to see if it was even possible to staff MORE church school options, and determining that they were, indeed, up for that challenge, we launched the plan for September 2021.

**September – December:** We have executed three hours of church school since September 2021, with online Zoom classes meeting at 9 a.m. for Preschool/Early Elementary Godly Play, Older Elementary Godly Play, and our middle school class Meet the Ancestors. At 10 a.m. we hosted childcare (mentioned above as having a five student max) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, and two outdoor church school classes that gathered on the Gordon House steps and then walked 1.5 blocks to an outdoor garden located adjacent to the Prudential shopping mall. The younger class of Godly Play students, ages 3 – 4<sup>th</sup> grades, garnered a dedicated group of mostly younger kids. For the first month we had one or two older students (5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grades) attend for a “Bible Explorers” class, which was essentially our Meet the Ancestors class “unplugged,” since that class's curriculum is video-based normally. This older class did not have the numbers

and the students eventually switched to the 9 a.m. online Zoom class instead. The younger class, however, thrived. At 11 a.m. we host a hybrid online/in-person Confirmation class for students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. This class has been quite successful, and students are evenly split between being online and in-person—which makes both venues feel valid and included. Youth Group also meets at 11 a.m., but will be covered by Martha Schick’s report.

While it has been hard having our attendance spread thinly over 3 hours of programming, all of the classes but one have 4 – 6 students most weeks (some average more), so they at least have enough present to make it feel good. We averaged 28.5 students from birth-12<sup>th</sup> grades each week during Fall 2021, which is roughly 75% of the average in Fall 2019 (the last time we were in-person). This tells me that we are, in fact, reaching a good many of our families through these many and varied offerings, even though we are spread thinner than we normally would be.

## Worship Support

While I play a mostly behind-the-scenes role in worship leadership, I help to create, produce, and support worship every week. This year I continued to help create and edit content of the children’s messages, working primarily with Shawn Fiedler, who is a genius. We work together on the scripts, then I will help out if there is a need to hand Shawn a prop or toss a bucket of water at him. I will occasionally lead a children’s message myself, and sometimes produce the videos if needed. I have also continued to lead and direct our baptisms, with the support of Nancy Taylor who loves to baptize babies! We completed four baptisms in 2021, two were pre-recorded via a Zoom call as we did in 2020, and two were pre-recorded in-person in the Chapel. I both lead a baptism orientation class for the parents and produce the baptism videos.



*Kate delivers Children’s Message*

Our children have helped out in reading scripture, in-person and in pre-recorded videos, and this September Isaiah Lee-Armandt (8<sup>th</sup> grade) gave testimony during our Celebration of the Christian Life service. We continued our traditions of Blessing the Backpacks in September and giving Bibles to 3<sup>rd</sup> graders in October—but we were unable to both lead worship in a Children’s Sabbath and produce a new Christmas Pageant this year. We hope to restore these two important traditions in 2022.

## Family Ministries

Family Ministries have been a bit of a mix this year, and most of them took place outdoors. In the spring we offered a “Palm Pickup” day that I paired with distributing kits with which to create an “Easter Garden” for our families. This fall we wanted to provide as many connecting opportunities as we could for families—so Rev. Katherine partnered with me to create Garden Worship—a monthly worship service held in the Public Garden at 9 a.m. on a Sunday. This small, short service included musician Joe Carr on guitar and Kathleen Simone as the storyteller who shared an adapted Godly Play story with the group. We practiced a “reverse communion,” collecting donations of food to share with our unhoused neighbors, and enjoyed each other’s company. Garden Worship met once in September, October, and November. In addition, every other week in the fall, Steve Holt hosted a “Family Outdoor Adventure”—gathering families at trails or parks around the Boston area to move together and catch up. These get-togethers helped folks to feel connected to one another again.



*The All-Church Retreat was a very successful one-day outdoor event.*

The Christian Formation team, Katherine Schofield, and I decided to transform our weekend retreat into a day-event this year, and we selected the Rolling Ridge Retreat Center in North Andover as the site. This event was as indoor/





*The Advent Family Service Project had a great crew this year.*

outdoor as we could make it—and it was truly a marvelous event. Speaker Rick Spaulding was a joy to plan with, and his commitment to making this a formative event for our congregation made everything about the day feel intentional and thoughtful. The students, my helper Elizabeth Perry and I spent all day tramping around outside in the wilderness, playing games, throwing rocks into the water, and crafting. It was a most wonderful retreat from the realities of COVID, and we are so grateful to have been able to host this event once again—even in a reduced capacity.

In December I was able to partner with Ralph Watson once again to host an Advent Service Project of preparing gift boxes of warm clothing and items of use for our unhoused neighbors. We had over 10 families participate, and this was the first time that our donations exceeded the costs of the supplies and gifts!

In addition to these physical, in-person events, families received several care packages during the year, before Lent, Easter and Advent. Packages contained weekly devotions for families, crafts, toys (Easter) and goodies.

### **Director of CFM**

The Old South staff has committed to intentional anti-racist work within our program areas and personally— and part of that commitment looks like devoting 20 minutes of our weekly staff meetings to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work. We take turns leading the conversations and I led our staff conversation three times this year. In addition to these important conversations, I also completed the (G)RACE Speaks Anti-Racism Training workshop in February.

I continued to work with the Old South Preschool for a portion of every week January through June, handling the Preschool's incoming finances, working with parents on current tuition payments and I continue to seek past-due account payments. I also served on the Search Committee for the new director, who turned out to be our own teacher Summer Marsh. Summer took over in June, and I handed everything but the past-due accounts to her. I continue to seek payment from families with past-due accounts prior to 2021 and receive a percentage of amounts I am able to collect.

The Children and Family Ministries staff said goodbye to our longtime Children's Music Leader Amy Budka. Amy worked with Old South for over twenty years, helping children to find their voices and gain confidence as musicians. She is so missed already. We have not replaced Amy – but did add a new childcare staff member, Coretta Corbin-Rival to our team of Sunday morning staff.

I am grateful to the people of Old South Church for investing in me during this hard period. As a staff we have laughed together, expressed our frustrations together, and always (somehow!) managed to begin again with each new context we faced. This staff is good-hearted, and hard-working, and I am grateful to be in ministry with each of you.

Peace always,

*Kate Nintcheu*



# Youth & Young Adult Ministries Leader



Last year, I think we all hoped that we would only write one Annual Report in COVID times. Alas, 2021 was another year of pivoting, reworking, and doing our best to do ministry in ever changing circumstances. Though the year was hard—and I mean *hard*—I am so blessed to work with and do ministry with some of the most remarkable people I've ever met. There is a lot to celebrate from this past year, even as we also mourn.

## Youth

Unlike most of 2021, we were able to meet in-person for several months this year. We spent most of our in-person time outside meeting up in a green area by the Prudential and participating in monthly garden worship. After garden worship, we would spend a leisurely morning in the Public Garden, eating breakfast together and people (and dog) watching while we discussed what was on our minds. We welcomed Michelle Eastman, a young theologian at Boston University School of Theology who educates churches about disability theology by sharing her own story and work. When the cold weather chased us back inside, we joined the LGBTQIA+ group for cookie decorating, a great way to reconnect with other folks in the church.



*Old South's Youth Group met outside for most of the fall of 2021*

We put on the first ever all-virtual Youth Sunday, with beautiful prayers, reflections, a children's message with several guest stars, and artwork, all done independently from the youths' homes. This great feat was only possible because of the hard work and dedication of our youth and the guidance of Kate Nintcheu, Jamie Garuti, and the pastoral staff. We were able to celebrate this hard work over the summer with a well-deserved ice cream social!

In 2021, our numbers grew, adding some new faces to our youth group. The meshing of perspectives and the fellowship extended from old and new members of the youth group is inspiring and brings me joy every week. Let me say this loud and clear: this group of teenagers is why I have hope for our future. Old South teenagers are fun, thoughtful, funny, insightful, driven, and all-around wonderful people. Of course, part of what makes this job so fun and fulfilling is my co-leader, Jimmy Kamel. Jimmy was made to work with teenagers (in addition to his holy and needed work as a nurse specializing in addiction care). His dry humor and deep spirituality make every week a gift. He has been the thread that grounds the youth group for years and I am so lucky to call him a colleague and friend.

This was a hard year to be a teenager. Schoolwork piles up, it feels impossible to get enough sleep, and there is a real sense of loneliness that is not going away. One of the great honors of my life is that some of our youth told me that youth group is one of the only times during their week that they can just be, without worrying about homework or school or sports. I'm working hard to keep our space one of rest and encouragement every week.

## Young Adults

The young adults also took advantage of the warmer months, winding down our weekly Zoom happy hours in favor of some outdoor trivia and brewery meet-ups. Some of the young adults attended the wonderful all-church retreat, where we spent time in Bible study, created a human “machine,” spoke about our experience with exile, and spent fellowship time on the beautiful grounds of Rolling Ridge in North Andover. We also had a blast at Anne and Phil Dearing’s home for a potluck!

While many of our young adults moved during the pandemic, we’re still welcoming new folks to the Old South community. We’ve had the chance to get to know each other through impromptu gatherings after Jazz and some post-Jazz programming, run by Abby Smith and Sarah Cowles. We still have several young adult groups meeting in a mix of in-person and online, accompanying each other through these past few years.

It’s been a great joy to see young adults getting married, having children, getting engaged, buying homes, adopting pets, getting new jobs, graduating, and entering other new and exciting life stages. I was blessed to attend several young adult weddings (including one of two Old Southerners who met at a young adult event!). These moments of joy have really gotten me through this past year.

## Personal

In big personal news, 2021 was the year I got married at Old South, bought a house with my husband, Greg, and adopted a rescue pup, Dorothy. I’ve been preaching at two local congregations and continued to move forward in the ordination discernment process, reaching Phase IV in early 2022. Old South has been a source of grounding and support for me, even in a year of seemingly endless hardships, disappointments, and pivots in ministry. I love this church and the people who make it so special.

Nancy, Shawn, Katherine, and Jess lead our services while constantly revising and rethinking, yet remaining true to the essence of joyous worship that is Old South. I also must thank each of them for their guidance and encouragement on my own discernment journey. I am blessed that I am surrounded by some of the most talented ministers as I look to my own future in the church. Kate is the one who has gotten me through this year. There is no better supervisor or friend. Jamie, William, and the rest of the tech team have brought our worship experience to all who want to see it, learning new ways every week how to keep our folks at home a part of our community. Helen, as always, is how this church continues to function, with help from Alex, who always has a smile on their face and a kind word. Mitchell, Willie, Zoe, and the rest of the ensembles consistently give my heart time to rest in beautiful music. Don continues to be an invaluable mentor and advisor, equal parts thoughtful and kind. Our sextons and building volunteers have kept us all safe and the building running smoothly in one of the most bizarre years in its history. And a special thanks to Katherine and David for being a part of my wedding. Old South will always be the place where my marriage and my ministry truly began, and I couldn’t be more grateful.

Blessings,

*Martha Schick*

# Director of Operations



This past year was marked by a growing optimism that the worst of the pandemic was behind us. Increasing numbers of visitors walked through our doors, worship services welcomed a hybrid of in-person and remote attendees, the Preschool continued to operate, and the use of our building by outside organizations and individuals continued to rise. The recent emergence of the particularly contagious Omicron variant has caused us to scale back slightly, but the general trend of 2021 has been toward increasing levels of openness. Of course, safety has always been the number one priority, but life has changed, not ended. Paying attention to public health guidelines, encouraging vaccinations for staff, requiring mask wearing while in the building, and receiving guidance from the COVID-19 Blue Ribbon Task Force has enabled us to stay safe while remaining open.

## Old South Preschool

One of the most significant factors contributing to the activity at Old South Church has been the ongoing operation of the Preschool. After surmounting the challenges of navigating ever changing guidelines to ensure the safe operation of the Preschool in 2020, Carolyn Davis, our long-time director of over 40 years, announced her retirement in February 2021. To facilitate the transition, a small committee of past and current Preschool parents was formed to vet candidates for the director position. We mounted an extensive search, but quickly narrowed the field to two candidates, one of whom, Summer Marsh, was offered the position. Summer has been a teacher at Old South Preschool for over twenty years so the decision to install her as the director provided continuity with the past and new energy and direction for the Preschool's future. She has quickly proven that she was the right choice as her quick thinking, calm demeanor, and able leadership has kept the Preschool open and financially sustainable throughout the pandemic. This is no small feat!

## Building Maintenance

Of course, no matter the level of activity, our historic building requires constant care, attention, and for people to be on-site! Our reception desk has been staffed seven days a week from 8am-8pm for most of the past year, while our faithful and capable sextons, Ozo Nwodo, Richard Serebour, and David Brode, led by Elias Perez, have taken on projects great and small. Some of these projects, such as painting four floors of stairwell in the Gordon House and the massive clean-out, organizing, and painting of sections of the undercroft, could not have happened in times when building use is at its highest, but, in all times, the 55,000 square feet of this building must be constantly cleaned and maintained. Our sextons start cleaning at one end of the building, including the city sidewalks and back alley, and work their way to the other end only to start all over again. Things also break: toilets leak, handrails become detached, paint peels, and light bulbs burn out to name just a few of the ongoing maintenance issues that arise. This keeps our sextons busy, but also requires that when a contractor is needed, someone greets them at the door (usually in the early morning), shows them "the stuff," explains the issues, and keeps tabs on them to ensure that the work is being done efficiently and economically.



*Elias Perez doing a masterful painting job.*

Our sextons do an excellent job of maintaining security. Even in these times of reduced traffic, a lot happens in the building and the surrounding neighborhood, and, though rare, not all of our visitors are well-intentioned. Elias, Ozo, Richard, and David are responsible for keeping an eye out and making sure our building is safe at all hours of the day and night. It's also their responsibility to ensure our receptionists, who cannot leave the front desk, feel supported.

In addition, on any given week, we can expect to be met by some maintenance surprises. For example, due to an unusual amount of rainfall in July, August, and September (the second most on record), we noticed the elevator shaft that goes to the basement was filling up with water. This did not affect operation, but the elevator did need to be

shut down so we could pump out the water. This is a common problem in Boston, and waterproofing measures need to be reapplied approximately every 10-15 years. During this same time period, we also saw more water infiltration in the undercroft than we had seen in recent memory. Fortunately, there was very little damage, and we have taken measures to ensure that items of value (including our archives which are stored in the undercroft) are off the ground.

Unrelatedly, Jonathan Ambrosino, who tunes and maintains our pipe organs, identified minor water damage on some of the organ works of the Chapel organ. There was no active leak, though we identified that this was likely coming from a toilet installed above the organ chamber. We made a repair and took preventative measures to ensure that, should a leak occur in the future, it will not damage the organ.

Continuing with the theme of water, it is well known that much of Boston, including the Back Bay, is built on “filled land.” Nearly all buildings constructed on filled land in the early part of the twentieth century and prior are supported on wood pilings that were driven through the filled land typically to a level 15 to 20 feet below existing ground surface. These pilings will last for centuries if they remain submerged in groundwater. However, if groundwater levels drop, the tops of the piles become exposed to air, are attacked by microbes, and eventually rot. For a number of years, Old South has monitored our own groundwater wells to ensure the pilings Old South sits on are appropriately submerged. Beginning in 2021, Old South Church entered into an agreement with the City of Boston’s Groundwater Trust allowing them to take over the monitoring of Old South’s wells, which they have begun measuring every 4-6 weeks. These measurements, as well as the results of other wells measured and maintained by the Groundwater Trust, are kept by the City and posted regularly on their website.

Another area requiring ongoing maintenance is our HVAC equipment which, though only seven years old, requires constant care and attention and is unfortunately prone to breakdowns. At the beginning of this year, we reengaged with TG Gallagher, the service provider that originally installed our HVAC equipment in 2014. In short order, they were able to identify and repair an elusive refrigerant leak that has been an ongoing source of problems.

Other notable projects in 2021 include replacing the flooring in two office buildings in Gordon House, installing new drapes and a stage curtain in Mary Norton Hall, and improving the exterior lighting of the tower and the cupola by updating the fixtures and switching to LED.

## **Community Outreach and Partnerships**

This year the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization partnered with the Community Purchasing Alliance to start a co-op of faith-based organizations in Boston in an effort to leverage their buying power and direct more resources to businesses owned by people of color. Though in its early stages, Old South Church was one of the first organizations to partner with GBIO in this initiative. In the past year, they helped Old South negotiate a new waste management agreement that is favorable to Old South. In addition, they helped Old South and other faith-based organizations in Boston lock in a low rate for electricity for the next three years. This was a move away from our previous energy broker, Power Options, but a move we felt was more in line with Old South’s values and supportive of an organization of which we are already a member.

Other community partnerships include an ongoing agreement with the Copley Farmers Market to store their supplies on site during their season of operation.

## **Property Insurance**

Old South Church is a complicated and expensive building to insure. In response to dramatic increases to the cost of insurance over the past two years, we have been investigating the scope of our coverage and pursuing alternative quotes. Our current provider, the United Church of Christ Insurance Board (UCCIB), has served Old South Church since at least 2011, though we left briefly for two years from 2014-2016 due to increased premiums. Through our investigations, we concluded that rates were up significantly across the board and that the UCCIB was still the best provider of property insurance for Old South Church. We also concluded that, due to the complexities of insuring a historic building like Old South Church, we would, under the guidance of the Trustees, pursue an outside consultant to evaluate and optimize our coverage.

Respectfully submitted,  
*John Braught*



# Tower Masonry Project

For much of 2021, the primary focus of facilities maintenance at Old South Church was the masonry work being done to the tower. The 2019 Boston Facade Ordinance inspection, a city-mandated survey conducted every five years, noted that the condition of the masonry Tower had deteriorated since the previous close-range inspection of 2014. Safety hazards observed precluded us from obtaining an exterior wall certificate. The most hazardous masonry conditions were stabilized or removed at that time while a plan for more thorough repairs was formulated. These more extensive repairs were originally planned to begin in the spring of 2020, but were postponed to the spring of 2021 due to construction restrictions at the beginning of the pandemic.

In February of 2021, on-site visits were made by two masonry contractors who bid on the project. This process was overseen by our historic architects, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. (WJE). After careful review, the local, woman-owned masonry company P.J. Spillane was awarded the business in March of 2021, though the contract was not finalized until May.

The scope of work includes rebuilding three corners of the tower where cracks are visible on the masonry. These cracks have occurred because the steel frame of the tower has corroded due to water infiltration causing movement in the masonry. Individual stone units, which includes brownstone and puddingstone, will be removed to expose the steel columns so that they can be cleaned of corrosion and a corrosion inhibiting coating applied. The corners will then be rebuilt using salvaged and/or replacement stone. In addition, extensive repointing of the tower masonry will be done, damaged stones will be cut away and new stones will be reproduced, adhered, and carved in their place (called dutchman repairs), and the slate roof will be inspected, with cracked and damaged slate tiles being replaced. There will also be repairs to the gutters and sealant applied around the various windows of the tower.

Funding for this \$2 million project came from the building capital reserves that are set aside annually from our endowment draw. We also were awarded a Community Preservation Act grant of \$150,000 from the City of Boston.

By far the most challenging feature of this project was engineering scaffolding that reaches to the top of the tower, and distributes weight across various roof levels and roof materials (e.g. the pitched slate roof of the Sanctuary and the flat rubber roof of the Parish House). Another challenge is the unknown extent of needed asbestos abatement, which exploratory measures have revealed is adhered to at least some portions of the steel columns embedded in the masonry. More abatement requires more complex scaffolding designs to allow for hazardous materials specialists to work and safely transport material, but the precise extent of the abatement cannot be known until access (with scaffolding) is achieved and the masonry work begins. The engineering of the scaffolding was originally, and ambitiously, scheduled to be completed by April 6, 2021. Due to these complexities, however, the erection of the scaffolding did not commence until the first week of June. It took over two months to completely engineer and erect the scaffolding which meant that masonry work did not begin until September 9, 2021, nearly three months later than expected. Despite this delay, project completion was still anticipated by the end of December, and the masons worked longer days and Saturdays through the first few months in an attempt to achieve this goal.

As unknown determinants are inherent in a project of this sort and magnitude, the scope of the project continually changed as work progressed.



*A crack at the one of the corners that needs to be rebuilt*



*Erection of the Tower Project scaffolding was not complete until late August.*



Fortunately, many of the discoveries revealed that the damage was not as extensive as originally anticipated. A significant portion of the upper tower did not show any signs of cracking to the masonry or corrosion of the steel columns, though extensive repointing (removal of existing mortar and replacing with new mortar) was required.



Because our grand front entranceway and our street facing sign board were concealed by scaffolding for the duration of this project, we used this opportunity to hang a 21x21 foot banner from the scaffolding with the United Church of Christ's "Be the Church" motto. In addition, work was put into creating sign boards for display in the narthex of the church that showed the history of Old South's "two towers" (the first having been built in 1875 and the second and existing tower in 1937) and explained the scope of the work currently taking place.



*The steeple lights will shine brightly for the next 10-15 years.*

We used the opportunity the scaffolding provided to replace four light fixtures at the base of the steeple. Though assisted by a lighting company in picking the fixtures, Old South Church's long-time electricians, Bizier Electrical, did heroic work climbing the scaffolding and adjusting the lights on numerous occasions to get the desired effect. The selection of LED fixtures means these lights should shine bright for 10-15 years.

Once the scaffolding was erected, the work of the masons proceeded rather seamlessly, though with continual adjustments to the project's scope as new sections of the building were "opened-up". They worked from the top down, beginning with inspecting the steeple roof and replacing the broken and loose slate tiles. Repointing the upper portions of the tower—at and above the belfry—occupied the majority of the time until those portions of the tower that showed signs of cracking and corrosion of the steel were arrived at. At that point, the process involved removing individual stone units from the corners and cataloging for reinstallation. Once the stone corners were removed, the exposed steel column underneath was abated, cleaned and an anti-corrosive material was applied. The corner could then be rebuilt using

salvaged, and, where necessary, new stone. The skill, difficulty, and space the work required only allowed for small crews to work on one section of a corner at a time. Portions of the southeast corner were being rebuilt, while portions of the northeast corner were being dismantled. This process continued down the tower, while scaffolding was being dismantled from the top.

As the extent of the corner rebuilds became apparent, the timeline for the project's completion was extended into March of 2022. Measures were taken, at additional cost, to ensure work areas were heated. Fortunately, other aspects of the project that were included in the original bid, such as the corner rebuilds of the upper portions of the tower, did not need to be completed and resulted in a credit to Old South. The cumulative effect of all the changes is that we still expect to come in within budget and only slightly over the original contracted amount. Though the change to the timeline is dismaying and the threat of work disruptions due to weather or COVID looms large, we have great confidence in the team working on the project and, so far, have been very pleased with the result.

Respectfully submitted,  
**John Braught**

# Preschool Director



## The Retirement of Carolyn Davis

It was a big year for Old South Preschool, one of transitions, changes, and a constantly shifting landscape. Personally, I stepped into this new role with some very large shoes to fill. When our beloved Director of 40+ years, Carolyn Davis, announced her impending retirement, it almost became an inevitability that I, after nearly 20 years of teaching at Old South, would end up deciding to throw my hat into the ring. After a long and thorough process, I was humbled and happy to be offered the position of the Preschool's new Director. Naturally, the news was bittersweet, as it would eventually lead to saying farewell to my amazing mentor of two decades. Fortunately, the very fact that the torch of leadership was being passed in-house ended up making it a smoother transition for staff and families alike. We had time to delve into the various aspects and nuances of the job, and I

was able to learn invaluable lessons about what it takes to keep the Preschool up and running and in keeping with the standards it has set over the years. Carolyn's retirement process was gradual, and her handing over of the reins was done in a deliberate, loving, and meticulous fashion. Even now, I know she is just a phone call away, and we touch base regularly. She (of course) remains a big part of our community, and will be named Director Emerita when the pandemic FINALLY allows us to finish planning a fitting retirement celebration. On Carolyn's last day in the building, we were able to have a small send-off with all of the Preschool teachers and a group of church staff. We needed to mark the occasion, and offer our thanks and well wishes, but the true ceremony giving due praise for many, many years of commitment, passion, and excellence is yet to come.



*Carolyn Davis (center) on her final days with teachers Saba Sodagar, Summer Marsh  
Sharon Reardon, Leslie Caputo and Jane Salamin*

Here is an excerpt from a letter I sent out to families over the summer:

*"As you know, I have been working with my respected colleague and mentor Carolyn Davis this summer to make the transition to Director. Thank you all for your support, well wishes, and encouragement. I remain, as always, fully committed to the continued growth and success of Old South Preschool. I also wanted to personally thank each and every one of you for putting your faith in us this year and remaining diligent in your efforts to keep the whole Old South community safe and healthy. Together, we managed to keep our doors open all year, and that was no small feat! Although we faced our challenges, the children, as always, kept us going and made it all more than worthwhile."*





Top: a visit to the Boston Common, Below: gazing at the beautiful paper cranes in Old South's portico.



*Their upbeat attitudes taught us all some valuable lessons about resilience and flexibility. Their creativity in making connections with one another and teachers was nothing short of inspiring, and their capacity to grow and shine during a global pandemic was a tribute to the amazing community of families that we are lucky enough to call ours."*

### **Resiliency and Positivity**

The children—the reason why we do what we do—continue to astound us with their willingness to comply with our requests and make the most of every situation (special shout-out to our two-year-olds in the Blue Room...sporting masks each day and proud of it!). Over the past (nearly) two years, I have witnessed so many unique and unforgettable moments of connection, from our first Preschool Zoom meetings in the spring of 2020 to an in-person, socially distanced, memorable and touching Red Room graduation in June of 2021. We have been challenged and tested, but through it all, the children, with their smiling eyes, unmistakable as they peek out over the unicorn, dinosaur, and space masks, pull us through.

### **Farewell To Jennifer Janson-Levitt**

In other big news this year: along with the news of Carolyn's retirement came the departure of our long-time Blue Room teacher, Jennifer Janson-Levitt, after 34 years of dedicated service! With her sweet disposition, team player attitude, and unflinching work ethic, Jen was an integral part of the school community who is greatly missed. She left us at the end of the school year with plans to move to Florida. As I write this, the temperature is 9 degrees, so congratulations, Jennifer! We wish her well and she knows our doors are always open for her. The school no doubt feels a little more empty and different without these two, but their voices still echo through the hallways.

### **Welcome, Jane Salamin**

Over the summer, the search began for a new teacher, and we needed someone who would be just right for the toddlers and the times. The universe brought us Jane Salamin, who has been a fantastic addition to our staff and to our village. She teaches in our youngest classroom with Saba Sodagar, a long-standing Green Room teacher who stepped up to help out when it became apparent that we would need to adjust operations in order to open the school as successfully as possible in the fall of 2021. Sharon Reardon and Leslie Caputo also gamely combined forces to tackle our new "combo" class together. Just as they have since COVID-19 first came into our lives, teachers have adapted and shifted to do what is best for the school.

### **Reconfiguring**

With continued lower and fluctuating enrollment due to a combination of the Boston Public Schools' Universal Pre-K program as well as uncertainty surrounding the pandemic, there were some tough decisions to make during the summer. After much thought and discussion, it came down to temporarily adjusting the format of the school. Switching to two open classrooms as opposed to three allowed us to maintain lower staff numbers while committing to providing the most robust learning and social experience possible for our current enrollees. The Blue Room class remained intact, while the Green and Red Room students were combined into one larger class. We were able to use the open classroom to our advantage, as it afforded us the space to spread out. This is particularly important during eating and resting times, when the children have mask breaks and remain six feet apart. We have also seen five new families enroll since the school year began. The school feels full, bustling, and happy. This pared-down arrangement has had a positive effect on the finances of the Preschool, and turned out to be what we needed to carry on in this pivotal year.

## Admissions, Open Houses, and Marketing

As we look toward next year, the goal is to return to the solid enrollment numbers that will support the operations of three classrooms once again. With that in mind, and in partnership with the church, we continue to try to get the word out about Old South Preschool. Our new feather banners proudly displayed in the gardens proclaim our existence to any passersby on Boylston Street, and have certainly increased our visibility. Special thanks to Nancy Taylor for getting the ball rolling on this project in June, to Jamie Garuti for the design and implementation, and to John Braught for the installation, upkeep, and relocation through wind, rain, snow, and construction.

For the first time ever, we hosted two Open House events in the fall for prospective families. We felt it was important to give people the opportunity to see the school in-person, but we also needed it to feel safe, so we required pre-registration, limited numbers, and confined it to adults only. The Open Houses were advertised on social media, our website, and in mailings. Through a combination of past and present parent volunteers, greeters and facilitators John and Nancy, and dedicated teachers who stayed after school and came in on a Saturday, we welcomed many interested parents. They toured the classrooms, spoke with teachers and me, asked lots of questions, and ended their visits in the Mary Norton Hall, our indoor gross motor “running space,” where they were able to spend time with current Old South parents as well as parents of alumni.

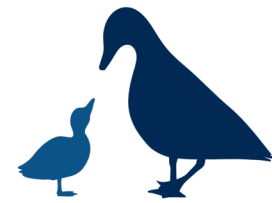
In addition to these events, we continue to offer after-school parent/child visits, as well as a morning virtual tour option. Families are able to view the classrooms in real time via Zoom calls. This option has proven to be particularly useful and welcome during the latest surge.

## Summerfest 2021

2021 saw the introduction of our first ever summer program—Summerfest. We were able to claim the Guild Room for six weeks and transform it into a welcoming oasis for a rotating group of campers. The camp fell into a sweet spot of summer, during one of those “lulls” of the pandemic where restrictions were loosened a bit, children could collaborate more, and, much to the delight of our enrollees, we even got to visit playgrounds! We were happy to welcome Emma Stern, who was home on hiatus from teaching in Japan and stepped in as a camp counselor in a place very familiar to her. Emma delivered just the energy we needed. She was an instant hit with the children and a delight to work with. Summerfest was a magical time for all involved.

## Pivoting, Pooled Testing, and Cohorts

Since reopening in September of 2020, we have taken our COVID-19 protocols very seriously, and families have partnered with us to keep our community healthy and safe. This continued after the summer break when we opened our doors once again in the fall of 2021. We escaped having COVID in our presence until the last month of 2021, when we had our first positive case reported and our very first classroom closure and quarantine. We followed the guidance of the CDC, EEC (Department of Early Education and Care) and MA Department of Public Health, and, fortunately, there was zero school spread. With reports of a surge looming, we began a weekly pooled testing



OLD SOUTH  
PRESCHOOL  
*in BOSTON*

*Our new school logo can be spotted everywhere, from our website, to our Facebook and Instagram pages, to our flyers, to stickers, and in parent communications. Soon we will have products available for handout and purchase.*



*Summer fun at Summerfest, led by Summer Marsh!*

initiative. This program is offered through the nonprofit organization Neighborhood Villages, in partnership with EEC. The goal of pooled testing is to catch positive cases early, stop the spread, and reduce the possibility of outbreaks and classroom closures. Samples are gathered and sent out for highly accurate PCR testing performed by Concentric by Gingko Bioworks. Currently, we have 100% participation among eligible students! Special thanks go out to Amy Coe, who has graciously volunteered to swab our Blue Room students, as children under three need to be tested by a medical professional. Thank you to Nancy, and Helen McCrady, for reaching out for volunteers and connecting me with Amy, who has been a lifesaver! I also need to mention the super trooper status of our students, who show up for their test proudly and bravely, and happily accept the sticker selections offered when they are finished.

Along with implementing weekly testing, we pivoted and reconfigured yet again. In order to maintain the integrity of our cohorts and eliminate the need for the whole school to have to close in the event of a positive case, we relocated the Blue Room students to the larger Green Room to allow the whole class to be together in one space while still having plenty of room for distancing. We also temporarily divided the Red Room class into two cohorts, with Leslie and her group in the Blue Room space and Sharon and her group in the Red Room space. As always, the children have adapted remarkably well, going with the flow, trusting their teachers, taking care of each other, and taking each day as it comes.

We follow the news closely, as it seems we never know what each new week might bring. Working with the only population still too young to be vaccinated brings a great sense of responsibility, and our teachers rise to meet this challenge every day. With eyes in the backs of their heads, they monitor children's safety, mask-wearing, hand hygiene, and personal needs while also pulling off engaging art and science projects and keeping the focus on our emergent, play-based curriculum.

## **Thank You**

I cannot thank the entire staff of Old South Church, as well as our Preschool families, enough for the amount of support and encouragement I have received. The Director Search Committee made the switch to being my Director Support Committee almost overnight once all was said and done. I feel so fortunate to be in a position to maintain my connections with our families from over the years, while also welcoming new ones into the fold. I am so grateful for the leadership and friendship provided over many years by Carolyn. I appreciate the unwavering faith of Nancy Taylor as she advocates for the Preschool. I also need to acknowledge John Braught, who has been nothing but supportive, helpful, understanding, and motivating in his supervisory role as Director of Operations. John has been a constant source of advice, counsel, levity, and reassurance, and a shoulder to cry on from six feet apart.

Thank you Linda van Praet and Helen McCrady for showing me the ropes and keeping me on track. I am lucky to have Donna Matson, in all her budgetary wisdom, helping us out in a Treasurer capacity. Kate Nintcheu has been an invaluable resource and help to the Preschool, and a wonderful sounding board throughout the transition process. Much appreciation goes to the whole Finance Committee as well, and everyone who has worked hard to ensure that the Preschool is still here today. As always, we are grateful to Elias Perez, Ozo Nwodo, and Richard Serebour for keeping our space in tip-top shape and for being willing to help out at a moment's notice. Corey Spence is a bright spot in our days, helps keep track of our comings and goings, and is able to locate me seemingly anywhere in the building if a prospective parent is on the phone, or if the courier has arrived to pick up our pooled testing kits. Thanks, Corey! Thanks, everybody!

We are a small school with a big heart, and we are so grateful that that heart beats on. Through changes and challenges, Old South Preschool feels the love. Onwards in 2022!

Respectfully submitted,

*Summer Marsh*



# Senior Church Administrator

For Old South Church in Boston, 2021 (though very different from 2020), continued to present challenges and ups and downs on many fronts. Optimism rose with the availability and efficacy of vaccines, the surge of variants erased it. Hopes were raised for some national reconciliation and the retreat of hateful vitriol and violence. However divisions between our citizens and leaders are larger than ever and any coming together seems impossible. The call to Old South's congregation and staff to constantly witness God's love and redemption is hard and more important than ever. That is why we are here, why we choose to be here.



## Nancy Taylor's Retirement

The most momentous event for me personally in 2021 was the announcement of the impending retirement of the Rev. Dr. Nancy S. Taylor as Old South's Senior Minister. I am sure that is also the case for many others. I have had the pleasure and privilege of working closely with Nancy for the past 16 years. I've watched our church community grow deeper and stronger under her leadership. I've seen her ministry touch many individuals, communities and institutions. Nancy is a leader, teacher and true witness to the love of Christ. I could go on... I rejoice for Nancy, trust that big changes are necessary and good, and will miss her dearly.

## Other Staff Changes

In January 2021 Assistant Administrator Rebecca Pasipanodya left for maternity leave. Rebecca was so enamored of her beautiful daughter that she decided to remain at home as a full-time mother! We said good-bye to Rebecca who has filled many shoes in six years at Old South. Happily Rebecca remains a member of Old South.

In August 2021 we welcomed Alex Pickering to the ranks as Old South's new Administrative Assistant. They are a great addition to our team. Alex has jumped right in and has taken over many of Rebecca's duties.

I was sad to say farewell to our longtime Preschool Director Carolyn Davis. Carolyn was a good friend and colleague from my first day at Old South.

*In almost every annual report I have written for the past 20 years, I have emphasized that my work is the support of all the other excellent work and accomplishment that you read about in the rest of this report. The following is a recap of my part of that work:*

## Use of our Buildings

While we have certainly confirmed that the work and message of Old South can happen far outside of our walls in Copley Square, our buildings are still our major platform for ministry. We work, worship, reach out and receive others in this space. People come here to pray, to ask for solace, to worship and learn, to use our spaces for meeting or performing. Managing who, how and when our spaces are used is a big part of my job.

In 2020 need for coordinating building use disappeared. In the fall of 2021, though still scaled back from pre-COVID days, we saw a return of in-person worship and other activities to our space.

On the congregational front, Thursday Jazz and Sunday All Church Worship began taking place every week in the Sanctuary as well as online. Adult, youth and children's ministry follow suit on Sundays. The Old South Choir started rehearsing on Thursdays and singing on Sundays. A highlight of in-person worship for us was October 10 when we offered two identical Blessing of the Athlete services prior to the rescheduled Boston Marathon. The blessing was on us as we welcomed hundreds of marathon athletes back to Boston for the first time in 2½ years.

The Old South Preschool had resumed its classes in the fall of 2020 and successfully continued operating throughout 2021.

A number of outside groups have resumed gathering at Old South; five Twelve-Step groups, Snowden High School theater classes; and rehearsals for three musical groups. We held a successful December Christmas Fair and hosted three beautiful Christmas concerts by outside groups, as well as our own Old South Ringers performances.

Of particular financial benefit was the use of our spaces by four different film projects at Copley Square. While dependent on timing and film locations our relationships with the film industry are good and we are always ready to help when we get a call.

Twenty-three weddings were held in 2021, fourteen in the Sanctuary and nine in the Gordon Chapel. Nine were rescheduled from 2020. Four were member weddings and nineteen nonmember.

Net building use income in 2021 was \$93,000. While well under pre-COVID levels it was encouraging to have the activity ramp back up, and to realize funds for the church.

At the end of 2021 the spread of the Omicron variant caused a rapid pull-back on public events. Old South's intended in-person Christmas Eve Services and New Year's Eve concerts were changed to single livestreamed events. Heading into January choral rehearsals will once again be on hold and some large concerts delayed. The future is unclear. As always Old South will remain flexible in addressing building requests while observing necessary caution and safety protocols.

## **Care of Our Buildings**

I want to insert a quick note about the care of our buildings, even though this is no longer a responsibility in my job purview. It is a pleasure to work with Director of Operations John Braught. Under his management, sextons Elias Perez, Ozo Nwodo and Richard Serebour keep the building in excellent shape. Larger projects are addressed and dispatched quickly. Most importantly our anticipated \$2 million tower repair project was successfully launched and is near completion.

## **Our Finances**

Another big part of my job is supporting all the work that goes into keeping Old South's finances current. I am responsible for the posting, tracking and reporting of all church income, excepting the Preschool and Trustees. I attend the Treasurer's meeting on a monthly basis to review income and expense prior the Treasurer reporting to Council. I work with Finance Administrator Linda van Praet on the budget and the audit and attend Finance Committee meetings during budget prep time. I oversee and report on the Deacons' Finances, income and expense.

## **Other Committees**

### **Leadership**

I serve as scribe for the Leadership Committee, keeping track of terms ending, eligibility for future terms, and tracking requests and responses as church members are approached to service.

### **Stewardship**

I work closely with the Stewardship Committee in the planning of the annual campaign for the operating year. I track pledges, manage correspondence and reporting and send out statements.

### **Planned Giving**

I assist the Planned Giving Committee in putting on their spring and fall annual events. I also track the membership in the Mary Norton Society.

### **Operations**

Even though John Braught has taken on the major load of the work of the Operations Committee, I continue to meet with them, reporting on building finances, staffing and administrative issues.

### **Congregational Care & Support**

I began attending Care & Support meetings this past year, in an effort to relieve some of the workload of Katherine Schofield. Chair Karen Hand is a wonderful leader and I look forward to working with her more in the future.

### **Celebration and Transition Teams**

With Nancy's announcement of her retirement, teams have been brought together to plan for the immediate future. I have agreed to serve on the Celebration Team, which will plan small and big celebrations of Nancy during her last

months at Old South, and on the Transition Team, which will be responsible for compiling a current church profile in advance of beginning the search for the 21<sup>st</sup> Senior Minister.

### **Thank Yous**

There are so many people with whom I am grateful to be sharing church life, it is impossible to mention them here. So I'll include my personal highlights.

### **Volunteers**

Front Desk – Tish Dragonette, Grace Rousseau, Ralph Watson and Brenda Gailhouse joined the ranks at the Front Desk and I am so grateful. Martha Coleman, Rory Razon and Lynn Wegner resumed their weekly slots when in-person resumed on Sundays.

Offering Counters – We officially said good-bye and thank-you to Jim Monsma who came into the Church on Mondays for 15 years to make deposits. Donna Matson has generously taken up the mantle, and also schedules the weekly offering counters. Randy Billings, Paul Dutton and Donna jumped back into the counting rotation, and Nancy Kukulan and Katie Corrigan also came on board.

### **Staff**

Receptionists – What can I say? They rock! Head receptionist Corey Spence keeps us all running smoothly. Part-timers George Sargeant, Shirley Bivins and Shelia Randolph are a great part of the team.

Program Staff – In addition to Nancy, I'm privileged to work with all of our amazing staff who create worship and music and programs, day in and day out. They all rock!

As I move into 2022, it is with hope for what might be, and gratitude for what is at Old South.

Respectfully submitted,

*Helen McCrady*



# Multimedia Director

In my corner of the church, 2021 was all about Project (P)REACH. As we continued along pre-producing worship service videos —our primary worship option for these pandemic-ridden times —we simultaneously planned and executed the next phase of virtual worship: the installation of multi-camera systems to broadcast services in real-time.

## Project (P)REACH

After discussions with worship leaders about our needs and goals for the upgraded livestream system, I put together a comprehensive document to share with potential vendors. The overall stated goal was “to have equipment permanently installed to enable live streaming in three spaces: the Sanctuary, Gordon Chapel, and Mary Norton Hall.” After researching A/V companies, I sent the document out to bid to Revelation Audio Visual, Boston Light & Sound, and PowerSound New England. At this point, I began working more closely with Mike Lennon from VMC Services, Inc. Mike installed our first livestream system years ago, and while Project (P)REACH was beyond the scope of his company, he served as a trusted consultant throughout the project.



Revelation’s proposal stood out to us as the only one utilizing a Network Device Interface (NDI) system. This system sends high-definition video over a dedicated network. While NDI technology is relatively new, it is the direction the livestream industry is headed, and thus we would be getting a future-proofed system. With NDI, we can add additional cameras to the livestream simply by plugging them into the network switch, allowing for easy expansion of the system. The PTZ (Point, Tilt, Zoom) cameras are from the company BirdDog, and are operated through a control board. We decided to put four cameras in the Sanctuary, two in Gordon Chapel, one in Mary Norton Hall, and one “roving” camera on a tripod for use in various rooms, or even outside. The whole system is operated from a station set up in the choir loft. The cameras are fed into a software called vMix, which connects to a livestreaming platform – in our case, Vimeo. (The platform we had previously used, Livestream.com, was unfortunately not a viable option with vMix.) Another software program, ProPresenter, feeds into vMix as well, allowing us to put lower thirds, hymn lyrics, and graphics on screen in real time. The audio comes from the same feed we’ve used for livestreaming in the past.

It was a long road from the proposal to completion of the installation. Revelation proved to be very difficult to work with, as they did not have the staff capacity for the number of clients they had taken on, and they consistently failed to communicate with us and meet deadlines. The project, originally promised to be complete by the beginning of July, was just barely functioning days before our first in-person pandemic-era worship service (September 12). In the following couple of months, we experienced many technical difficulties. From cameras not connecting, to ProPresenter not functioning (still an occasional problem to this day), to a broken camera controller, to audio issues, we were off to a troublesome start. I spent my days trying to get the system up and running, dealing with new problems each week. Fortunately, by then I had hired two Livestream Production Assistants—William Wei and Oussama Ouadani. Our little Multimedia Team quickly became expert at troubleshooting and remaining calm under pressure. There were many times when we couldn’t get the system functioning until literally the minute before the worship service began.

After a couple months though, we had worked out most of the kinks. We became more skilled at operating the cameras, and before long were producing beautiful, visually interesting livestreamed services. As we head into the New Year, we seek to improve the audio quality and switch away from Vimeo to a more user-friendly livestream platform. My biggest takeaway from this \$58,000 project was how essential it is to have a good team. We could not have pulled this off without Mike Lennon’s consistent, always-ready presence and deep technical knowledge; William and Oussama’s perseverance and quick problem-solving skills; Revelation’s tireless technician Steve; and the endless support and patience of John Braught, Nancy Taylor, Helen McCrady, Shawn Fiedler, and Mitchell Crawford. What a team!

## Additional Projects

In addition to this momentous undertaking, we carried out several other feats, from artistic to technical.

In the beginning of the year, we witnessed the horrors of the January 6 attack on our nation’s Capitol. In response, we draped the church in black to signify mourning, hanging three blank banners across the Portico. We also released a statement condemning the attacks, and tolled the Great Tower Bell every day at noon through the month of January.

Other building adornment projects included creating outdoor feather flags to advertise the Preschool, and my largest physical creation yet—a 21x21 foot scrim “Be the Church” banner to hang from the tower during the construction project. Ralph Watson spearheaded a beautiful art installation, organizing members and friends to fold over 2,000 paper cranes which were hung in the Portico to commemorate the hundreds of thousands of lives lost to COVID-19.

On the technical side, we worked with our web developers, OneEach, to upgrade our website from Drupal 7 to Drupal 8 (essentially a complete rebuild), and then from Drupal 8 to Drupal 9. I also found a stable solution to livestreaming at the Old South Meeting House, using a piece of equipment called a PepWave that I rented from Rule Boston. This discovery will be helpful for years to come.

It was another tough year, but we made it through together. I am continually amazed at and grateful for my hardworking, caring colleagues. I look forward to another year of creating and growing together.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jamie Garuti*



*Feather banners in front of the Church publicize our Old South Preschool*



*Tower construction may have marred our aesthetic temporarily, but Old South's message remains clear!*

# Old South Archivist

This year has been taken up by a series of projects, alongside efforts to clear some of the backlog in the archives.

## African Research Project

At the start of this year, Nancy Taylor approached me regarding research I had previously done on enslaved and free African members of the church for the 350<sup>th</sup> *Encyclopedia* and asked me to expand on this work both to add to the history of the church and to contribute to the Middle Passage Ceremonies and Port Markers Project, with which Old South Church is affiliated. My main accomplishment for 2021 was a more in-depth investigation of enslaved and free members of color at Old South Church, and also white members of the church who were enslavers. My finished report is available alongside reports by other parishes at <https://www.churchreparations.org/parish-histories>



## Rare Books and Manuscripts

Prior to this year, Old South's rare books were stored in the "Historian's Office" upstairs but following an office reshuffle they needed to be relocated and came downstairs to the archives. Some of these items are several hundred years old and are unfortunately deteriorating in our care. After discussion with Nancy Taylor, the decision was made to explore either selling or donating them. I indexed and assessed the materials and coordinated with buyers and repositories to view the items and present bids. This project is on hold until approved by the Board of Trustees but will likely go ahead in 2022.

## Digitization of Microfilms and Annual Reports

In 2020, I had contacted the imaging services department of the NEDCC (Northeast Document Conservation Center) about the prospect of digitizing a collection of Old South records on microfilm. Fortuitously, the imaging department had recently purchased a machine for digitizing microfilms and offered to convert Old South's records for free in return for using the films for training workers to use the machine. Simultaneously, I approached the Boston Public Library imaging department about getting the hard copy volumes of Old South's *Annual Reports* scanned, and they scanned two volumes for us. All these records are now digitized and are saved to Google drive, waiting for a more permanent storage location.

## Baptisms

Continuing last year's efforts to make Old South's vital records digitally available, this year I began a project of transcribing infant baptisms from early records as Hamilton Hill only included adult baptisms in his *Historical Catalog* of the church. This project will continue into 2022.

## Backlog

In between projects, I have been trying to making inroads into the many boxes of backlogged records that have been sitting in the archives for years, awaiting processing. My first step was to sort back through the dozen or so boxes that A previous archivist, Kobi Alka, had marked for destruction many years ago, mostly confirming her decisions that items were duplicates or irrelevant but occasionally retrieving a few documents for retention. Then I sorted the contents of the backlogged boxes into topics ready for processing and integration. The processing and integration of these materials will continue into 2022.

Your Archivist,

*Emily Ross*



# Treasurer

The past year was full of unpredictable twists and turns for our country and our church. But the financial foundation of Old South is stronger than ever, thanks to continuing generosity of church members and a booming stock market.

We started 2021 with a plan for deficit spending of about \$180,000. We knew we could handle that because of our \$600,000 accumulated surplus. We anticipated a second year of minimal building income while costs of maintaining staff and doing hybrid worship would rise from the prior year.

We ended the year at breakeven. In addition, we added another \$301,000 to our accumulated surplus due to the forgiveness of our 2019 federal loan under the Paycheck Protection Program. The results reflected a spectacularly successful stewardship campaign, the return of some building users and lower than expected spending in almost every department. Payments from the endowment were largely locked in for the year, and the stock market boom means higher income going forward. Congregation members met or exceeded their pledges.

Old South Church ended 2021 with its finances strong. We have installed much of the equipment needed for hybrid worship, incorporating distant viewers with members in the pews. We have again budgeted for a significant deficit, but we have ample resources and confidence in our budget process.

Overall, Old South's finances are probably as strong as they have ever been. With a \$50 million endowment and careful budgeting, Old South and its 147-year-old landmark building are positioned to endure for a long time.

The tables below show the revenue and expenses of the Council's operating budget. It compares the actual revenue in 2021 to the revenue in 2020 and to the budget expectations for 2021. This first table shows the main sources of income. The total figure also includes small amounts of additional income from programs, special funds and other sources. These are unaudited numbers that may be changed slightly.

## Income

Major Revenue Sources	2021	2020	2021 Budget
Endowment Funds	904,166	811,378	904,165
Pledges	1,131,867	1,119,991	1,081,800
Plate and gifts	95,758	117,700	85,000
PPP Loan forgiven	300,900	0	0
Building Use Income	120,086	96,562	75,000
Miscellaneous	129,015	108,586	104,800
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,681,792</b>	<b>\$2,254,217</b>	<b>\$2,250,765</b>

The endowment income excludes the annual payment of over \$400,000 to the building capital reserve fund. That fund, which currently totals almost \$2 million, is reserved for capital expenditures needed to preserve and improve the building and the organs. It is currently being drawn down to repair the tower.

The contribution of the endowment to the operating budget is based on

the Trustees' endowment spending rule. It states that 4% of the endowment, computed each September based on the past 12 quarters, may be spent each year, going to the building capital reserve and the church's operating budget.

One way to look at the church budget is to break it down between income from the endowment and income from the congregation. The money we get from the endowment roughly pays for the costs of running the building year to year, including sextons, insurance, utilities and the longterm capital expenses of the building. Congregational support and building use income pay for the costs of worshipping God with preaching and music, educating and communicating with members and making grants to other organizations. Our legacy of a large endowment supports our most important legacy asset, the church building itself. Our congregation, through pledges and gifts, supports everything we do.

Worth noting here is the narrow 1% increase in pledge income compared to 2020. At press time, it is too early to know how the 2022 pledge drive will compare with last year. But we know that without in-person gathering, membership isn't increasing, which is worrisome going forward.

## Expenses

The adjacent table shows the main areas of expense and how they compared to the budget and year earlier numbers. Total spending includes unallocated expenses like parking reimbursements, workers comp and the audit. On the expense side, most departments spent less than budgeted. We left an office job unfilled for several months when one employee decided not to return

from maternity leave. Having just a single morning service reduced need for professional singers. Upgrading computer equipment cost less than expected.

Major Expense Categories	2021	2020	2021 budget
Church Maintenance	566,431	544,773	562,168
Church Office	620,511	584,866	650,426
Ministers	432,500	408,531	435,419
Music	286,372	277,331	301,512
Christian Formation	165,285	151,658	177,539
Outreach	159,521	164,757	154,498
Miscellaneous	148,142	82,891	151,396
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,378,762</b>	<b>\$2,214,807</b>	<b>\$2,432,958</b>

As we face the uncertainties of 2022, we are in a strong financial position. The budget for the year contemplates a significant deficit by year-end as we deal with inflation in insurance costs and provide employees with inflation protection through a 6% cost-of-living increase. But we have over \$900,000 in accumulated surplus. Moreover, our conservative budget process has consistently resulted in smaller than expected deficits or annual surpluses.

In addition to the preceding review of our operating finances, I'd like to cover three other financial issues.

## Payroll Protection Loan

The government's PPP loan, which we took in spring of 2019, worked just as intended. It gave us confidence to maintain employment in the face of vast uncertainty as the COVID pandemic began. We kept paying musicians and receptionists. We preserved the jobs of teachers in the Old South Church Preschool, which had been on precarious financial footing. The PPP program has been criticized for providing money to folks that didn't really need it. But the reality is that without the PPP loan, even financially strong entities like ours would have need to reduce staff because of the way COVID shutdowns reduced operations and appeared to threaten incoming revenue.

## Old South Preschool

Old South runs a secular school that occupies Church School classrooms during the week. It is back on a solid financial basis after a troubled two-year period. Problems developed after the city of Boston started providing free preschool for many four year olds, cutting enrollment. We also discovered that some tuition payments hadn't been received. With the retirement of the long-time director, a new head has reduced the teaching force to a sustainable level, accounting oversight has been tightened, and the Preschool is again making occupancy payments to the Church.

## Building Black Wealth

We have taken a small step to address racial wealth inequity by moving \$250,000 of our funds to a federally insured money-market account at OneUnited Bank in Roxbury, the nation's largest black-owned bank.

As Treasurer, I meet monthly with Senior Minister Nancy Taylor, Senior Administrator Helen McCrady, Director of Operations John Braught and Financial Administrator Linda Van Praet. Trustee Chair Kristi Geary attends occasionally. We review financial operations line-by-line reviewing discrepancies between budgeted and actual income and outlays.

The Treasurer also delivers a monthly report on financial operations to the Church Council and attends the monthly meetings of the Board of Trustees. I also participate in Finance Committee meetings where Niels Peetz-Larsen oversees preparing the annual budget.

Old South's finances are guided by principles of security, integrity and transparency. Watching them wouldn't be possible without the smart and extensive involvement of many people. And, as I wrote last year, the church is lucky to have a Senior Minister who knows almost as much about the church books as she does about The Good Book.

Respectfully submitted,

**Bill Bulkeley**

# Historian

It has been an honor to serve as Old South's Historian for a second year. This year, my work has centered around two very different projects. One project was a continuation of the work I started in 2020, which was documenting the impact of the COVID pandemic on Old South. Once I wrapped up this project last fall, I began doing research and writing for an upcoming booklet to be titled: *A Really Useful Guide to the Senior Pastors of the Old South Church in Boston*. We expect to have this fun and (hopefully) informative booklet ready to distribute to the congregation in early May before the Reverend Nancy Taylor's retirement as our Senior Minister.

In the spring of 2020, Nancy had asked me to interview members of the Old South Community in order to document our lives together during this unprecedented time in history. I conducted and wrote summaries of additional interviews throughout the spring of 2021, and I tried to capture the voices of members, leaders, and members of the Old South Church staff. During this time, I also wrote monthly summaries of various church activities so that future leaders of the Church would get a taste of how our beloved church remained a connected community during the first year of the pandemic.

At the September of 2021 meeting of Council, I presented everything I had written in a report titled *The Old South Church Faces a Pandemic*. The full report is available with the September 2021 Council documents, and I am glad to email it to anyone who would like to read it.

Below is a timeline of key events during the first eighteen months of the pandemic.

The written summaries of all my interviews can be found in an appendix to this annual report (see page ). I want to thank all the members of Old South who agreed to be interviewed about their everyday life and work during the pandemic.

My idea for my other project came to me one evening when I was browsing through a souvenir booklet that I bought when I was in London a few years ago. This booklet is titled *A Really Useful Guide to the Queens & Kings of England*. While it is full of whimsical facts about each Queen/King, I was impressed by how well it captures some of the key accomplishments of England's Royalty. I decided that I wanted to help honor Nancy's ministry by researching and writing a similar booklet about Old South's twenty senior pastors. I have written the content, and Joshua Cleaver (the designer of Old South's 350th anniversary exhibits) is currently working on the design. I want to thank Nancy Taylor for her guidance and enthusiastic support during the process of putting this booklet together.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kate Silfen*

## A Timeline of the First 18 Months of the Pandemic

A Chronology of the Worldwide Spread of the Coronavirus (CNN, 2021):

- December 31st, 2019: the Chinese Government confirmed that doctors were treating dozens of cases of a Pneumonia of unknown origin in Wuhan. Days later, officials identified the Novel Coronavirus as the source of these cases.
- January 11, 2020: Wuhan, China reported its first death from the Coronavirus.
- January 20: Cases of the Coronavirus were reported in Japan, South Korea, and Thailand.
- January 21: The first US case of the Coronavirus was recorded in Washington State.
- January 30: After thousands of cases were reported worldwide, the WHO declared that the Coronavirus was a public health emergency of international concern.
- February 11: The WHO names the coronavirus "COVID-19," which stands for Corona Virus Disease 2019. By this time, the death toll in China had reached 1,113. There were 390 cases reported in other countries.
- February 23: The Italian Government issued a lockdown order due to the rapid spread of the Coronavirus.
- February 24: Iran had 61 known cases of the virus.



- February 28: The first US death from the coronavirus was reported just outside Seattle, Washington.
- March 1: The FDA issued emergency authorization of Remdesiver for the treatment of COVID-19.
- March 3: There were 90,000 reported cases around the globe, with 3,000 dead.
- March 11: The WHO confirmed that the spread of COVID-19 constituted a global pandemic.
- March 15: The CDC recommended that there be no gatherings of more than 50 people in the United States.
- April 28: The US passed 1 million confirmed cases of the virus.
- May 4: World leaders pledged a total of \$8 billion for prevention, testing, and vaccine research for COVID-19.
- June 11: The US passed over 2 million cases of COVID-19.
- July 27: The Moderna vaccine entered phase 3 of clinical trials.
- November 18: Pfizer and BioNTech completed phase 3 of the trial for the Pfizer Vaccine.
- December 11: The FDA grants emergency use of the Pfizer Vaccine.
- December 18: The FDA grants emergency use of the Moderna Vaccine.
- February 22, 2021: The number of deaths from COVID-19 surpassed 500,000 in the United States.
- February 27: The FDA granted emergency authorization for the use of the Johnson & Johnson Vaccine.
- April 27: The global tally of deaths from COVID-19 passed 3 million.

### **A Chronology of the Pandemic in Boston (CBS Boston, 2021 & Mass.gov, 2021):**

- February 1, 2020: On February 1st, the City of Boston reported its first case of the Coronavirus.
- February 26-27: Biogen hosts an international conference at the Marriott Long Wharf in Boston. This conference was later linked to up to 300,000 COVID-19 cases in the United States.
- March 10: Governor Baker declares a state of emergency.
- March 15th: Governor Baker orders all the schools to close. He also ordered all restaurants to serve only take-out, and limited all public gatherings to under 25 people.
- March 23: Governor Baker orders all non-essential businesses to close.
- May 1: Charlie Baker signed an executive order for all residents to wear a face mask when they cannot socially distance themselves from others.
- December 14: The first doses of the Pfizer vaccine arrive at the Boston Medical Center and are distributed to healthcare workers, first responders, and the elderly in nursing homes.
- February 1, 2021: People over the age of 75 become eligible to receive the vaccine.
- February 18: People over the age of 65 or with at least two medical conditions became eligible to receive the vaccine.
- March 11: Teachers and childcare workers become eligible to receive the vaccine.
- March 22: All adults over the age of 60 become eligible for vaccination.
- April 1: Adults over the age of 55 or people with one medical condition become eligible for vaccination.
- April 19: All residents over the age of 16 become eligible for vaccination.
- May 12: All residents over the age of 12 become eligible for vaccination.

### **A Timeline of Old South Church's Response & Ministry**

- **March 6, 2020:** Senior Minister Nancy Taylor begins communicating with the Old South Church community over email about the Church's response to the spread of COVID-19. She announces that the church will keep its door open while the risk of spread in Boston was low. Extra efforts will be taken to keep the church clean, and hand sanitizers had been purchased to be placed in public areas. She and church leaders are in the process of assembling a Blue Ribbon Task Force to help guide the congregation through this challenging time. Upon the recommendation of health professionals, communion will be reduced to flat bread.
- **March 7:** The Reverend Nancy Taylor sends out a follow-up email to outline recommended health practices from three of Old South's physicians.
- **March 12:** After meeting with Old South's Blue Ribbon COVID-19 Task Force, the Reverend Nancy Taylor announces that all worship services will be held online at least until Easter. Committees and small groups will

meet over Zoom or an alternative medium. The Church would keep a small section of the Sanctuary open for public prayer. In this same message, The Reverend Taylor announces the following schedule of virtual programs and worship services to begin on Monday, March 16th:

**\*Sundays**

\*9 a.m. Godly Play

\*10 a.m. All-Church Worship

**\*Thursdays**

\*6 p.m. Virtual Jazz Coffee House featuring the Willie Sordillo Ensemble.

**\*Monday-Friday**

\*12 p.m. daily prayer

\*4 p.m. "High Tea" with different members of the ministerial staff

**\*Mondays**

\*Worship Matters with Minister of Music Mitchell Crawford

**\*Tuesdays**

\*Spiritual Practices with Interim Associate Minister Katherine Schofield

**\*Wednesdays**

\*Mid-Week Peek with Senior Minister Nancy Taylor

**\*Thursdays**

\*Spiritual Practices with Urban Pastoral Resident Amo Ngoepe

**\*Fridays**

\*Friday Fun Days with Acting Associate Minister Shawn Fieldler

- **April 12**, The Old South Church has its first virtual Easter worship service.
- **May 29**: The Reverend Nancy Taylor announces that Old South staff would be returning to work on-site one or two days a week. Small gatherings of up to ten people will be permitted to come to Church in-person for various ministries and outreach efforts.
- **August 1**, The Old South Church sanctuary re-opens for limited visitors from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. daily.
- **December 24**: The Old South Church has its first virtual Christmas Eve worship.
- **January 2021**: Old South celebrates its first virtual stewardship season with guest speakers offering their testimonies of faith throughout the month.
- **March 7**: The Old South Church holds its 351st Annual Meeting via Zoom.
- **March 13**: The Old South Church observes the one-year anniversary of the pandemic with a litany of remembrance for all who lost their lives to COVID-19.
- **April 4**: The Old South Church celebrates a second virtual Easter service.
- **June 25**: In an email to the congregation, the Reverend Nancy Taylor announces that in-person, live services would start again during the week of September 12th.
- **July 1**: Old South members enjoy a live, in-person "Jazz Ice Cream Parlour." This was the first, in-person service since March of 2020.

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# Board of Trustees

*Kristi Geary, Chair*

*Priscilla Geigis, Tom Grant, Paula Hammond-Cunningham, Tom Hudson, Manuel Navia*

*Bill Bulkeley (Treasurer), Nancy Taylor (Senior Minister)*

The Trustees of Old South are pleased to report on the significant progress in the status of the Board's primary areas of responsibility: management of the **endowment**, provision for the **long-term capital needs** of the church infrastructure, care for the congregation's other **heritage assets**, and oversight of **financial audits**.

Highlights from the past year include:

- The Trustees continued their commitment to being an anti-racist board with individual members making presentations and leading discussions at monthly meetings.
- Old South's endowment increased by 9.9% to reach \$47.4 million.
- About \$950,000 of distributions from the endowment were made to support the church's operations.
- Nearly \$415,000 was added to the Capital Reserve for long-term building and organ maintenance. Capital expenditure payments of about \$850,000 were made during the year, resulting in an ending reserve balance of approximately \$1.6 million.
- Further details of these developments and other aspects of the Trustees' responsibilities follow.

## Anti-Racism

The Trustees of Old South have committed themselves to being an anti-racist board. As such, the topic was added as The Trustees of Old South have committed themselves to being an anti-racist board and the topic is a standing agenda item for all meetings. This step has set the stage for on-going discussion, learning, planning, action, and progress.

The Trustees have:

- Continued to work with the Leadership Committee to strive for a board membership that is diverse and representative of the congregation;
- Added anti-racism to the list of socially responsible investment factors used in evaluating and selecting investment managers of and holdings in Old South's endowment portfolio;
- Worked with the Boston Public Library to explore if and how any of Old South's collection of books and/or manuscripts in their care may be utilized for the purpose of educating the Old South Church family and the community at large about racism and white supremacy dating back to the colonial period and providing a platform for thoughtful discussion that inspire actions that are anti-racist;
- Encouraged and support the prioritization of under-served/represented/ resourced groups when evaluating building use requests, and the active consideration of minority-owned businesses and vendors when contracting services for Old South; and
- Discussed the relationship between church founders and slavery and began the conversation about Reparations and what that might entail for Old South

## Endowment

Investment Pool Balances	<u>12/31/2020</u>	<u>12/31/2021</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Trustees Funds	\$40,850,235	\$44,943,399	\$4,093,164
Deacons Funds	2,290,799	2,509,205	218,505
<b>Old South Total</b>	<b><u>\$43,141,034</u></b>	<b><u>\$47,452,604</u></b>	<b><u>\$4,311,669</u></b>
Mount Vernon Church*	3,438,265	3,777,227	\$333,962
Total Investment Pool	<u>\$46,579,299</u>	<u>\$51,224,832</u>	<u>\$4,645,632</u>

\*Management of Endowed Assets for Mount Vernon Church

In mid-2019, the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee of the Mount Vernon Church entered into an agreement whereby the Trustees serve as investment managers of Mount Vernon's endowed funds. The Trustees

provide fund accounting and transaction assistance to Mount Vernon. Mount Vernon pays a proportionate share of the fees of our investment advisors.

### Gifts Added to Trustees Funds in 2021

The Trustees are deeply grateful to the many members and friends of Old South whose continued support for The Campaign for Old South Church made donations to the Micah Mission, Teaching Church, and Open Productions endowed funds. Also in 2021, generous gifts and bequests from church members and the estate of Joyce Atkintola totaling more than \$26,000 were added to the general endowment.

### Distributions from Trustees' Funds

	<u>2021 Actual</u>	<u>2021 Budgeted</u>
Operating Budget	\$ 874,169	\$ 971,463
TTEE financial and other services	34,269	57,024
Capital Reserve Funding	413,620	430,169
<b>Total Distribution</b>	<b><u>\$1,322,058</u></b>	<b><u>\$1,458,656</u></b>

### Performance

In spite of the continuing COVID pandemic and uncertainties it brings with it, the markets in general and the church's portfolio continued strong with a gain of 9.9%. The Trustees maintain a balanced approach to portfolio allocation that includes a wide range of assets to limit exposure to specific risk factors. The Trustees track the investment performance of the endowment against an index composed of U.S. and international stocks, bonds and other assets that reflect the target portfolio allocation. In 2021 and during the last five and ten year periods, Old South's investments have outperformed the composite benchmark.

<b>Returns</b>	<u><b>2021</b></u>	<u><b>5-Year*</b></u>	<u><b>10-Year*</b></u>
Old South Church Endowment	13.8%	11.5%	8.8%
Old South Composite Benchmark	12.0%	9.8%	8.0%
S&P 500 Stock Index	28.7%	18.5%	16.6%

\*Average annual compound returns

### Endowment and Investment Policies

The investment policy is designed to achieve financial equilibrium over the long term and preserve the purchasing power of the endowment assets. This concept of financial equilibrium incorporates both the support of the mission of the church and the preservation of its assets, including Old South's legacy church property at 645 Boylston Street. To achieve this objective of growing the endowment with the long-term rate of inflation, the policies are comprised of four main elements: a spending policy, an asset allocation model, a portfolio management structure, and a socially responsible investment (SRI) component.

**Spending Policy:** The spending target continues to be 4% of a weighted moving average of the market value of the Trustees Endowment as of 9/30. The goals of the policy are to avoid spending in excess of the long-term real rate of return and to reduce year-to-year fluctuation in the distribution caused by short-term market performance.

**Asset Allocation:** The investment policy calls for broad diversification in the portfolio with funds allocated to several asset categories. The portfolio is rebalanced as needed to operate within allocation parameters and the Trustees monitor longer term fundamental shifts in the markets to determine if adjustments to those parameters are warranted.

**Investment Management Structure:** All of Old South's investments are placed with fund managers that have been carefully evaluated based on the quality of their management team, their performance record, and cost structure. Working with the church's long-time financial advisor, Cambridge Associates, the performance of each fund is evaluated regularly.

## Asset Managers and Allocations as of 12/31/2021

### Allocation

<b>US Equities</b>	<b>38.5%</b>
Calvert Equity Fund (socially responsible, large-cap growth)	13.8%
Dimensional Fund Advisors Sustainability Core	13.5%
Vanguard S&P 500 Index Fund	11.2%
<b>Global ex US Equities</b>	<b>33.3%</b>
Dimensional Fund Advisors International Sustainability	19.6%
Vanguard FTSE Emerging Markets ETF (non-US equities)	9.6%
Fidelity International Index (non-U.S. equities)	4.1%
<b>Fixed Income</b>	<b>17.9%</b>
Breckenridge (bond fund)	14.1%
Vanguard Inflation-Protected Securities Fund	2.4%
USAA Bond Fund (fixed income securities)	1.0%
Boston Community Capital (fixed interest loan)	0.4%
<b>Hedge Funds/Private Markets</b>	<b>9.9%</b>
Forester Opportunities LP (market hedging fund)	5.4%
Lone Cypress (market hedging)	3.4%
Forester Strategic Opportunities (market hedging fund)	0.6%
Illumen Capital (private equity fund)	0.5%
<b>Cash and Cash Equivalents</b>	<b>0.4%</b>
UBS and Vanguard (cash reserves)	0.4%

### Changes to Asset Strategy and Socially Responsible Investing:

The Trustees, working closely with the advisors at Cambridge Associates, made the following change to its asset allocation strategy and holdings at the end of 2021:

The Trustees have set a long-term goal to invest 5% of the portfolio in private market opportunities as private markets returns are expected to exceed those of public equities. Our investment in 2020 in Illumen Capital, a minority-led fund of funds, had solid returns during 2021 and we continue to seekout similar private market investments.

### Long-Term Capital Needs

**Capital Reserve:** It is the goal of the Trustees to ensure that sufficient funds are available for the timely maintenance of Old South's buildings and organs. To that end, each year the Trustees allocate a portion of the distribution from the endowment to fund the Capital Reserve. The amount set aside is informed by: the estimated long-term average annual costs of maintenance (evaluated in conjunction with the Operations Committee, Director of Operations, and the Minister of Music), the rate of inflation of Boston-area construction bids, and the amount of interest earned on reserve balances.

The Capital Reserve balance at the beginning of 2021 was about \$2,000,000 and almost \$415,000 was added to the Capital Reserve as part of the endowment distribution. In November, the Trustees voted to release approximately \$850,000 from the Capital Reserve account to fund masonry repairs to the tower which had been approved in prior years. This activity along with market gains resulted in the end-of-year balance of capital reserves of nearly \$1,600,000. The Trustees remain optimistic that the Capital Reserve will be able to meet the remaining expenses as the tower repair project winds down.

**Insurance:** The Trustees review annually the insurance policy to protect Old South Church in the event of loss. For 2021, the blanket coverage for the buildings, organs, and other on-site assets had a significant increase by 18% to \$41.1 million. Additionally, insurance premiums rose substantially, prompting the Trustees to take a close review of our

existing policies including coverage and deductibles. Through this review process, it was determined that the church needs to add cyber insurance coverage to our existing policy and this coverage is now in place for 2022. The Trustees intend to work with a commercial insurance consultant during 2022 to ensure that we have proper coverage in place and to determine insurance coverage metrics to be used in future years.

## **Heritage Assets**

**Early Church Silver Collection:** Three pieces of antique silver dating from 1643 through 1804 remain on loan to the Museum of Fine Arts Boston at no direct financial cost to Old South. During December, one of these pieces, a “Netherlandish beaker” crafted by Isaac Alinck, was included in an installation focused on Religious silver at the MFA’s Dutch galleries. The MFA expressed their gratitude to Old South for the loan of this beautiful piece.

**Rare Book Collections:** The Trustees continue to monitor the care of the Thomas Prince and Old South Collections which have been on loan to the Boston Public Library (BPL) since 1866. Given the value and historical significance of these collections, key considerations regarding their care include (a) ensuring the safety and preservation of the collections, (b) maintaining adequate access to the collections for scholars, (c) minimizing the risk of a loss concurrent with possible damage to the church building, and (d) undertaking all of the preceding at limited or no cost to Old South Church. Once again, the Trustees reassert that it is in the best interest of Old South Church to maintain its relationship with the BPL in its care for the church’s rare books collections.

**Deaccessioning:** In addition to the books stored at the BPL, Old South has a number of books, handwritten documents and glass slides which have been physically housed in our archives. During 2021, the church archivist reviewed the archives and prepared a proposal for certain items to be **deaccessioned**. It has been deemed that the items on this list are “not directly relevant to Old South Church” and that the space which they require can be better used by more relevant materials. Additionally, the care and preservation of these documents is expensive, and they are at risk of further deterioration. The proposal includes suggested disposition of these items, some to be sold and others to be donated to appropriate institutions. The Trustees have reviewed the Archivist’s proposal and will vote on deaccession in early 2022. The Trustees wish to thank Emily Ross for her thoughtful and exemplary work on this project.

The collections at the BPL continue to be inaccessible to the public during renovation of the Rare Books and Manuscripts department with the anticipated reopening to take place in mid-2022. As part of the Trustees anti-racism initiative, the Trustees continued a conversation with the Manager and Curator of Rare Books to investigate how selections from the church’s collections might be utilized to educate the Old South Church family and the community at large about racism and white supremacy as well as Native American issues dating back to the colonial period, to face any past complicit role of Old South and its members, and to create a platform for thoughtful discussions that inspire actions that are anti-racist.

## **Financial Audit Oversight**

In early 2020, newly engaged auditors, Capin Crouse, delivered an unqualified opinion on Old South’s financial statements for both 2017 and 2018, and in early 2021, the auditors again gave an unqualified opinion on the 2019 audited financial statements. An unqualified opinion is an independent auditor’s judgment that an organization’s financial statements are fairly and appropriately presented, without any identified exceptions, and in compliance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). The Trustees are pleased that our audited financial statements have resulted in unqualified opinions. Our goal for 2022 is to improve on the timeliness of future financial audits so that our audited statements are presented closer to fiscal year end.

## **Acknowledgements**

In addition to my thanks for the hard work of all my fellow Trustees, I would like to recognize the outstanding support provided by Helen McCrady, Senior Church Administrator, John Braught, Director of Operations, Linda Van Praet, Director of Accounting and Human Resources, and Emily Ross, Archivist.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kristi Geary*



# Church Council - Moderator's Report

*Phil Stern (Moderator), Rob Gabler (Clerk), Bill Bulkeley (Treasurer), Kate Silfen (Historian)*

*Maren Batalden (At-Large 2023), David Becker (Leadership), Rica Black (At-Large 2022)*

*Caitlin Callahan (Christian Service & Outreach), David Connaughton (Membership), George Delianides (Deacon),*

*Allen Gifford (Deacon), Cathryn Griffith (Planned Giving) Tracy Keene (G(R)ACE Speaks), Rick Kraft (Planned Giving),*

*Tim Longman (Christian Formation), Lisa Loveland (Operations), Manuel Navia (Trustee), Janet Nolan (Columbarium)*

*Sam Ou (Music), Niels Peetz-Larsen (Finance), Pam Roberts (At-Large 2022), Chris Roughton (At-Large 2023)*

*Brad Swing (At-Large 2021), Kathy Wade (Stewardship), Ralph Watson (At-Large 2021)*

*Nancy Taylor (Senior Minister), Katherine Schofield (Interim Associate Minister), Shawn Fiedler (Acting Associate Minister)*

*Amo Ngoepe (Pastoral Resident), Mitchell Crawford (Minister of Music), John Braught (Director of Operations)*

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With the COVID-19 pandemic still raging, all of us have learned to accept greater uncertainty in our day-to-day activities as well as in our longer-term planning. Yet one thing seems abundantly clear as we pass the second anniversary of this viral scourge: we are not going back to the way things were. Old South has long been a “God is still speaking” congregation, and we’ve continued to adapt while staying true to our mission. That has required a tremendous effort on the part of many, and tho’ tempest-toss’d, this sturdy ship remains fit for the journey ahead.

After holding our worship services fully remote through the summer of 2021, we brought back in-person services on Thursday evening and Sunday mornings starting in September. But they were now “hybrid” services, enabled by a significant investment of time and financial resources. Under the leadership of Jamie Garuti and Shawn Fiedler, we outfitted the sanctuary, the chapel and other rooms for live streaming with multi-camera coverage and upgraded software capability. While many returned for in-person worship, online attendance remained relatively constant, implying that we have expanded our reach year-over-year.

Our COVID-19 Task Force comprised of physicians and other leaders (*members: David Becker, Brad Swing, Nancy Kukulan, David Duong, Hillary Mull, Lisa Mahnke, Kyle Nelson, Allen Gifford, Phil Stern, Steve Holt, Rich Hassinger and Old South Staff: Nancy Taylor, Helen McCrady, Shawn Fiedler, Katherine Schofield, Mitchell Crawford, John Braught and Jamie Garuti*) continued to monitor the progress of the pandemic, guiding church leadership and staff on our protocols, which have included no food or drink being served, limiting the number of people based on the size of the room, asking anyone who feels at all sick to stay home, and requiring that everyone remains masked (including our choir) for the entire time they’re inside the church. Moreover, with the spike in cases from the Omicron variant at the end of the year, we made the difficult decision to move our Christmas Eve service and New Year’s Eve concerts entirely online. We will continue to adapt and seek this task force’s guidance as we determine the best way of holding our services and events in the future.

This adaptability is not easy, as it has required our Deacons, music leaders and musicians, and ministerial and operations staff to be fleet-footed and willing to make changes on a moment’s notice. We’ve asked a great deal of these groups, and we’re extremely grateful for their combined efforts which have allowed us to build back our in-person offerings, present those offerings on-line, and make it an engaging experience for both audiences.

While our meetings remained virtual, the work of our committees and task was quite tangible. The Christian Service & Outreach Committee reviewed and interviewed many worthy organizations and selected two new excellent groups for our financial support. And while so much more remains to be done, we made excellent progress on our anti-racism agenda, with our (G)RACE Speaks and Christian Formation committees engaging large numbers of Old South members in a continued dialogue about race, our church staff making Old South a visibly more welcoming environment for people of color, and our operations team, Finance Committee and trustees directing a greater share of our financial resources to minority-owned businesses. As specific examples of the latter point, we have deposited \$250,000 at OneUnited Bank, the nation’s largest black-owned bank, and the Trustees made an investment in Illumen Capital, a minority-managed fund.

As is made abundantly clear in the various committees’ reports, the church’s finances have remained strong. Our finance leadership, headed by Bill Bulkeley, Niels Peetz-Larsen and Kristi Geary, developed a budget that seemed somewhat aggressive, as it called for a sizeable deficit. However, given the generous increase in congregational

support, the better-than-expected facilities revenue and careful spending control, we ended the year at a near break-even, not including the forgiveness of the PPP loan received in 2020. Moreover, we were able to take on a \$1.7M capital project to make repairs to the church tower without dipping into operating funds due to the capital reserve funds that have been accruing over the last several years.

We have several new challenges ahead of us in 2022, not the least of which will be a transition in our senior minister role. With Reverend Taylor's announcement of her planned retirement in May 2022, Council authorized three committees which, with the diligent efforts of the Leadership Committee headed by David Becker, have been staffed and have begun their planning work. The first committee is the Celebration Team, convened by Karen Hand, whose role it is to plan an enthusiastic celebration of Reverend Taylor's ministry at Old South. The next is the Interim Team, co-chaired by Kristi Geary and Randy Billings, which will plan for our ministerial leadership during the immediate period after Reverend Taylor's departure and before a new Senior Minister is engaged. The final committee is the Transition Team, led by Anne Dearing, which is charged with the task of preparing a profile of Old South which will describe Old South, what we are today and what we wish to become, for future Senior Minister candidates.

We are blessed to have such an abundance of members willing to put their hands on the oars and keep Old South shipshape. With this transition to a new Senior Minister, who will only be our 21st, we are not headed into uncharted waters, but we will be moving into a new reality. We will hold steadfast to our mission of living and voicing an open and welcoming theology while continuing to adapt in our approach for doing so. This community of faith will continue to thrive as it learns how best to serve God in our post-pandemic world.

Respectfully submitted,

*Phil Stern*

# Board of Ministers & Deacons

*Paul Brouillette and Susan Navia, Co-Senior Deacons*

*Jonathan Aleshire, Sarah Cowles, Christine Del Favero, George Delianides, Sara Donahue, Allen Gifford  
Jer Jurma, Richard Ling, Jake Maliel, Donna Matson (Treasurer), Lauren Nackel, Tom Ralston, Tony Rich, Mercedes Ridao,  
Alex Simpson (Secretary), Nancy Taylor (Senior Minister), Katherine Schofield (Interim Associate Minister)  
Shawn Fiedler (Acting Associate Minister), Amo Ngoepe (Pastoral Resident)*

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## Overview

The Board of Ministers & Deacons is charged with supporting and promoting the religious and spiritual life of the congregation. In a normal year, the Deacons collaborate with the ministers on matters of worship and initiatives that involve the spiritual life of the church and its people. March 2021 found us continuing the on-line worship that began on March 15, 2020, driven by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Deacons' role in on-line services was circumscribed. Deacons' support of on-line activities included having Deacons present on-line during the community hour programs and participating in Sunday morning communion. The Deacons continued to support adults and families who bring their children to enter the waters of baptism and collaborated with the Membership Committee to welcome and vote in new members to our local church through the new on-line worship platform.

In addition to supporting worship, at least one Deacon sits on each of the following Committees: Benevolence, Care & Support, Christian Formation, Christian Service & Outreach, Council, (G)RACE Speaks, Leadership, Members in Discernment, Membership, and Music.

## Personnel

At our February 2020 meeting we celebrated the contributions of outgoing Co-Senior Deacon, Rubén Bonilla Santiago, who served five years as a Deacon and a year as Co-Senior Deacon. We also offered our heartfelt thanks to John Lape for his six years of service. The church by-laws stipulate that the Board of Ministers & Deacons will be made up of equal numbers of male and female identified persons, so we welcomed the arrival in March of Jer Jurma, Richard Ling, and Tom Ralston who joined us for three-year terms. Later in the year we were joined by Sarah Cowles and Lauren Nackel, who assumed the partial terms of Deacons who have moved out of the area.

## Initiatives

The Deacons tasked a subcommittee with determining how we could best support the church's anti-racism goal through our programs and our financial stewardship. The Deacons' meeting agenda now begins with a note on historic actions taken by Old South members in support of diversity and equity. These notes are followed by a parallel commitment in today's church. The Anti-Racism sub-committee has considered how to update our hospitality workshop that trains ushers to reflect this mission. At the beginning of our next budget cycle, we will transfer some of our funds to a Black-owned bank to reflect these goals.

## Worship

What a joy it was to welcome worshipers back to the Gordon Chapel for our summer watch parties starting on July 4. We watched the on-line service on a large screen together, in-person. Such a treat after 16 long months worshipping sequestered in our homes.

On September 12 we moved to in-person worship, in the sanctuary, with some modifications – seating every other pew, masks mandated, and communion and coffee hour were deemed too risky. This would not be the last of the modifications, but they were small inconveniences that allowed us to worship together in our spiritual home.

In early 2022, the COVID infections in Boston rose again, driven by a new COVID variant, so additional modifications were in order. While there was still plenty of music during the services, the congregation no longer sings and the number of musicians has been minimized. These are temporary adjustments until it is safe to reclaim our normal worship traditions. We wait and pray that time will be soon.

Respectfully submitted,

*Paul Brouillette and Susan Navia*

## Deacons 2021 Income & Expense

### Income

Albee Fund	\$889.98
Endowment- Charitable & Pious Fund	\$32,476.42
Flowers Fund	\$1,420.00
Scholarship Fund	\$317.08
Mens Club Fund	\$795.72
Strong Memorial Fund	\$928.00
Provo Minister's Discretionary Fund	\$1,038.76
Provo Religious & Benevolent Uses Fund	\$4,155.06
Council Funds	\$10,405.16
Gifts & Memorials	\$2,075.00
Bank Interest	\$134.23
Discretionary Investment Income	\$37,041.40

**Total Income** **\$91,676.81**

### Expenses

Benevolence Grant	\$2,000.00
Community Benevolences	\$3,000.00
Flowers	\$3,726.98
Ministers Discretionary Benevolences	\$4,000.00
Outreach Committee Grants	\$25,405.16
Scholarship	\$319.07
Field Ed Intern Support	\$2,000.00
Provo Religious & Benevolent Uses	\$4,155.06
Bank Charges	\$216.00
Merchant Services Fees	\$67.91
Congregational Care & Support	\$571.00
Membership Committee	\$261.76
Miscellaneous	\$635.76
Subscriptions & Dues	\$193.50
Worship Support	\$19,761.76
Pride Morning Worship	\$500.00
Seminarian in Care	\$2,000.00
Meeting House Sunday	\$3,674.60
SNEUCC	\$1,400.00
Lady Doak College	\$400.00
Old South Operating Gift	\$15,000.00
Piedmont College	\$1,300.00
AIDS Walk Support	\$765.00
Life Safety	\$138.09

**Total Expenses** **\$91,491.65**

### Revenue to Funds

#### Gifts to funds

Elinor Yeo Music Fund	\$5,000.00
Soup Kitchen Fund	\$500.00
Dartley Fund	\$9,128.00
Allston Brighton Food Pantry Gifts	\$525.00

#### Store Sales to funds

Christenson Cross	\$69.65
	<b>\$15,222.65</b>

#### **Expenses paid by Funds:**

Southwell Sander	\$18,422.81
Music conference	
Black banners	
Open Door awards and honorariums	
Archivist	
Mass/Cass Response Consultant	
Indigenous Peoples Day- gifts & honorarium	
Soup Kitchen Fund	\$376.23
common cathedral 2.27.21	
Seniors	\$1,881.07
Akintola cremation, flowers and urn	
Dartley Fund	\$8,180.93
Scholarships	
Allston Brighton Food Pantry	\$645.00
Seminarian Fund	\$1,900.00
In Care Evaluation	
Huff Music Fund	\$668.00
Glockenspiel Restoration	
	<b>\$32,074.14</b>

# Mt. Vernon Church

## Mount Vernon Church

The Mount Vernon Church, Congregational/United Church of Christ, held its 179th annual meeting on Sunday, October 17, 2021, for the second time in its history by Zoom. The congregation voted to contribute \$109,300 to Old South Church and to donate over \$57,000 to other charitable purposes.

## History

The Mount Vernon Church, founded as a Congregational church in 1842 on Beacon Hill, closed the doors of its second church building at the corner of Beacon Street and Massachusetts Avenue in 1970. Mount Vernon Church contributed the proceeds from the sale of its building on Beacon Street as part of the endowment of the Old South Housing Fund. During our first 128 years, Mount Vernon served as a partner or key supporter in the creation or growth of numerous important institutions and ministries, including Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan, City Mission Society, and Andover Newton Theological School. The first Mount Vernon Church pastor, Edward Norris Kirk, chaired the boards of trustees of both Wellesley College and Mount Holyoke College. One of our Sunday School teachers evangelized Dwight L. Moody in 1855, who was then 18 with a seventh grade education. Moody became the preeminent evangelist preacher of the late nineteenth century, founder of Northfield-Mount Hermon School, a church, bible institute, and publishing house. In 1941, Mount Vernon Church's mission church in Chilesso, Angola listed 4,291 members. Joseph Neeisima Hardy, whose American education was financed by Old South member Joseph Hardy, was a member of the Mount Vernon youth fellowship and ordained at Mount Vernon, the first Japanese Protestant minister. He went on to found Doshisha University in Kyoto, which today has thousands of students. Their student groups frequently visit Old South Church.



The Mount Vernon Church signed an affiliation agreement in September 1970 with Old South Church, and last September was the 51<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the association of the two churches. The affiliation agreement provided that each church would continue as a separate entity, that members of either church could be members of both, that Mount Vernon would make a substantial annual donation to Old South and that Mount Vernon would continue to make donations to charities of its choice. The Senior Minister of Old South Church would also be the Senior Minister of Mount Vernon Church. Mount Vernon Church retains its independence as a dues-paying, open and affirming United Church of Christ congregation with its own traditions and endowment, out of deference to our proud heritage and tradition and out of affection and respect for our original Mount Vernon members, who joined Old South in 1970, but also retained their separate identity, while contributing so much to Old South Church. The last surviving member of Mount Vernon from 1970 died on November 6, 2016. All current members of Mount Vernon joined from Old South Church.

## Annual Meeting

After several years of discussion, Mount Vernon Church and the Old South Trustees moved forward with the transfer of the Mount Vernon Church endowment to the management of the Old South Trustees in 2020. The Mount Vernon Church endowment totals about \$3,000,000. This does not include a separate trust fund of which Mount Vernon Church is a 50% beneficiary, but does not control.

The congregation voted \$100,000 for the general budget of Old South, over a thirty percent increase from 2020, as well as the annual legacy of \$300 for flowers from the Charlotte Holmes Fund. In response to a request from Old South Director of Music Mitchell Crawford, the congregation also voted a one-time grant of \$9,000 to Old South to refurbish the sanctuary piano, originally a gift from Mount Vernon.



The Mount Vernon Church continued its support of the Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology with grants for scholarship purposes. Created under the will of Benjamin Franklin, baptized at Old South, the Institute prepares students with practical training in a wide range of careers. Many of the students are people of color, first and second generation Americans. The Institute has been our neighbor in the South End, now in the process of moving elsewhere in Boston, and prepares many students from disadvantaged backgrounds for twenty-first century technical jobs. In an expansion from Mount Vernon's historic ministries, the congregation on a motion from the floor by Ted Wade, voted to make an initial donation of \$1,000 to Massachusetts Interfaith Power and Light, a non-profit organization, focused on environmental justice.

### **Congregational Action**

The congregation approved the Deacons' selection of nine organizations to receive grants totaling \$23,000. The organizations included

Boston Seafarer's Friends Society	\$1,000
Church World Service	4,000
Doctors Without Borders	4,000
Farrington Memorial	1,000
Friendship Works Inc.	2,000
Gould Farm	1,000
Oxfam America	4,000
Women's Lunch Place	2,000
Greater Boston Food Bank	4,000

Adding the \$1,000 for Massachusetts Interfaith Power and Light and deleting a repeat of a special grant to the Old South Preschool not required for 2022, the congregation amended Treasurer David Vogan's recommended budget to \$171,300, which included \$2,000 for UCC dues, \$3,000 for administration expenses, and six grants totaling \$21,000 to four UCC denominational related organizations. Those charities were:

Andover Newton Theological School- Robert H. Christenson Scholarship	\$2,500
Andover Newton—General Fund	2,500
Andover Newton—Joseph Hardy Neesima Scholarship	2,500
City Mission Society	3,000
Congregational Library	2,500
Our Church's Wider Mission, Mass Conference of the UCC	8,000

The Reverend Nancy Taylor noted that most of the original members of Mount Vernon in 1842 were of English and Scottish ancestry. One hundred years later, the congregation had diversified and included Armenian, German, Chinese, and people of still other cultural backgrounds. In 1942, facing the challenges of World War II, Mount Vernon Church in Boston declared a goal of achieving universal brotherhood.

The congregation approved the minutes of the 2019 annual meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

**Larry Bowers**  
Moderator

# Christian Formation Committee

*Tim Longman (Chair)*

*Frankie Doolittle, Marcia Gregg, Clara Kim, Vard Johnson, Stephanie LaShoto-Westfield*

*Neil Miller, Susan Navia (Deacon), Harrison Reeder, Meagan Breakwell-Smith*

*Kate Nintcheu (Director of Children & Family Ministries), Martha Schick (Youth & Young Adult Ministries Leader)*

*Katherine Schofield (Interim Associate Minister)*

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The word for the year for Christian Formation work at Old South was flexibility. Our staff and teachers and students and other participants had to repeatedly adapt to the changing circumstances forced on us by the COVID crisis. We are extremely thankful for everyone's adaptability and for the hard work that our staff and teachers put in to provide educational opportunities for the entire Old South community. We look forward to a return to regular activities as conditions change, even as we hope to retain some of the best features that the situation has forced on us.

## **Children's Programming—Zoom and In-Person**

For the first half of the year, children's Christian education programs were offered entirely online over Zoom. While this platform was a challenge for our smallest children and some children of all ages were "Zoomed out" from too much time on Zoom for school and other events, many of our school-aged children participated, and our teachers did an excellent job of adapting their offerings to the online format. For Godly Play classes, pre-recorded presentations of the Bible stories were accompanied with opportunities to share online. Classes for older children were more interactive. Kate Nintcheu also made available numerous off-line resources for children and families, so that even those not participating in on-line classes could continue to have opportunities for Christian formation. Both our youth and young adults continued to meet online as well.

With the vaccine available for adults and older children, we shifted our programming in the fall to offer more options. Online classes continued for younger children at the 9 a.m. hour, but we also added an outdoor in-person option during the 10 a.m. hour for children who wanted to meet in-person while their parents were in church. Confirmation class was held in a hybrid format at 11 a.m., with some of our large group of confirmands in-person and others joining online. Youth group also mixed online and in-person activities. With most of our children still meeting over Zoom, we added several new opportunities for families to gather in-person – a once-a-month outdoor service in the Public Garden and outdoor excursions. We also held a very successful retreat the first weekend of October, drawing over 40 people to Rolling Ridge Conference Center in North Andover for a day-long intergenerational chance for study, worship, and fellowship.

## **Adult Education**

Our adult education programming has needed to be similarly flexible. We held online sessions for the adult education Forum in the 11 a.m. hour after church throughout the first half of the year and had very strong attendance, with participants joining from across the globe. We try to provide a wide range of topics in the Forum. Our most popular sessions are our annual Old South Goes to the Oscars discussions of nominated movies. We have also sponsored sessions with the Climate Crisis Task Force, Christian Service & Outreach, and other committees to help introduce the congregation to important ideas and activities within the church. Hoping not to lose our remote audience, in the fall, we switched to a hybrid model for the Forum, with a gathering at the church simulcast online. Finding the hybrid format rather limited, we invested in better equipment that allows those online to see what is going on at the church more effectively and to participate more fully. We plan to keep the hybrid option for our programming as much as possible so that Old South members and friends outside Boston are still able to participate.

Our Committee provides limited guidance and oversight to the Small Groups program that brings together small clusters of Old South members and friends for regular meetings. Church staff help to form groups in response to popular interest and to offer support to groups when necessary, though most of the groups function well on their own. Some groups are organized for only a short duration, others exist for a few years and then may disband as members move or move into new phases of their lives, while some groups have continued for many years. These groups moved online with COVID and they have responded in different ways to changing circumstances, some remaining online, others trying options for gathering in-person.

## **Anit-Racism**

The Christian Formation Committee has taken seriously the charge to include an anti-racist focus in our activities. Our Godly Play teachers added a new lesson for Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday to introduce our children to ideas about civil rights and holy justice. We partnered with the (G)RACE Speaks Committee during Black History Month in offering sessions in the Forum. Over the summer, we again partnered with (G)RACE Speaks to offer anti-racism workshops. We are committed to including a regular focus on race and anti-racism in our educational offerings.

## **Thank-yous**

Finally, I must acknowledge and celebrate our staff who have proven themselves to be absolutely amazing. Kate Nintcheu has responded with calm agility and creativity to the challenging circumstance and constantly changing conditions. She has ensured that the children of Old South have continued to enjoy fellowship and to receive instruction in Christian education despite all of the hurdles thrown up in our path. Martha Schick has kept our youth and young adults engaged and growing in their faith. Katherine Schofield has organized creative and engaging programming for adults, even ensuring that there would be no break in programming while she was out on parental leave! The work of these three fantastic women of faith has kept our Christian educational programs running in the face of great obstacles and they deserve great praise and thanks. A word of appreciation as well is owed to our Sunday school teachers for their flexibility and tenacity. Our church and our children are lucky to have them!

*Timothy Longman*

Chair

# Christian Service & Outreach

*Caitlin Callahan & Phil Dearing, Co-Chairs*

*Virginia Berman, Toby Bottorf, Paul Brouillette (Deacon), Carolyn Clark, Sara Donahue (Deacon), Harry Hanson  
Diana Kim, Erica Meyer, Ann Rogers, Amo Ngoepe (Pastoral Resident), Katherine Schofield (Interim Associate Minister)*

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During a continuing time of tremendous need, the Christian Service & Outreach Committee felt blessed to be able to give generously to Boston-area neighborhood nonprofits doing critical work. We are grateful to the Old South Church congregation, past and present, for supporting us to give over \$100,000 in grants each year and are grateful to our nonprofit partners for all of the ways they have adapted throughout the past two years to meet pressing needs.

## New Grants

While the ongoing pandemic kept us from doing as much volunteering or in-person gathering as in years past, we were able to use that time to engage deeply as a committee and with the broader church community to think critically about our grantmaking practices. A few principles have stayed the same: we are committed to giving relatively large grants (typically \$20,000 per year), making the funding unrestricted for partners to use as they know best, and giving for multiple years to the same partners to establish a stronger relationship with those organizations. We have added a stronger focus on leaders with lived experience at organizations we fund, continuing to build on the church's anti-racist journey. We also worked to solicit more input and engagement from the congregation, generating over 20 recommendations this year for funding.

After that process, we ended up funding two new organizations: Alternatives for Community and Environment with \$40,000 over two years and Fathers' UpLift with \$60,000 over three years.

**Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE)** is a Roxbury-based environmental justice nonprofit that has been organizing for more than 25 years to ensure that low-income communities have their voices heard. For far too long, decisions around zoning, pollution, and transit have disregarded the voices of non-white and low-income communities. With a new mayoral administration, federal infrastructure funds, and an upcoming transition in the governor's office, this is a pivotal moment for changing that. We are excited about ACE's initiatives to increase the accessibility of energy efficient housing, bringing down unequal asthma rates, and to challenge unequal zoning rules across the city. Dwaigh Tyndal, a Black Executive Director who has been doing community organizing for over 25 years, is leading this work and we will do our best to support him and his team.

**Fathers' UpLift** works to assist fathers in overcoming barriers (financial, oppressive, emotional, traumatic, and addiction-based) that prevent them from remaining engaged in their children's lives. They engage in a three-tiered approach to their mission, focusing first on impacting individuals, then on building families, and finally on enabling societies and communities to better serve and support fathers and families. The majority of Fathers' UpLift staff, including their CEO, are people of color, including both Black and Hispanic coaches, making their services accessible to both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking populations in low-income communities that have traditionally been excluded from high-quality mental health services. With the pandemic and the continued harm of mass incarceration fraying community, we are excited to fund an organization with an equitable and effective mental health approach. We are very excited to see them grow!

## Renewed Grants

For 2021, we renewed grants to three organizations, awarding \$20,000 each to **City Mission**, **common cathedral**, and **Health Care Without Walls**. City Mission and common cathedral are evergreen grantees that we have and will continue to support, as they are doing critical work in our community in partnership with our congregation. Health Care Without Walls is in their final year of a three-year grant that we awarded in 2019, providing for the healthcare needs of elderly homeless women through their Bridges to Elders program.

## 2021 Awards

We awarded the Robert Christenson Outreach Award of \$2,500 to Families for Justice as Healing, a nonprofit led by formerly incarcerated women of color, dedicated to transforming spending from incarceration to community

services. They are working to enact a prison construction moratorium in Massachusetts and to demonstrate what alternatives to incarceration in historically over-policed neighborhoods could look like.

We awarded the Duane Day Award of \$2,500 to Mothers for Justice and Equality (MJE). The mission of MJE is to end neighborhood violence by empowering mothers and youth to challenge the normalization of violence and become effective catalysts for change in their homes, schools, and communities. By reclaiming the identity of their communities, they restore a sense of hope and purpose for children, youth, and adults.

### **Emergency Grants and Community Programs**

Our Committee also gave a number of smaller one-time emergency grants. We gave \$2,000 (matching congregational donations) to support the UCC's efforts to assist the people of Haiti in the aftermath of the destruction caused by the 7.2 magnitude earthquake and the impact of the subsequent tropical storm, \$3,000 to support the housing and transition of two families of Afghan refugees in the Boston area in partnership with the Paulist Center, and \$2,183.48 to support the UCC disaster relief efforts in Western Kentucky after a tornado.

As several of our members serve on the Micah Mission Fund Committee as well, we receive regular updates regarding their work and priorities. We look forward to our ongoing close collaboration.

Our Committee continued to support Old South's partnership with the Snowden International School, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Toy drive, and City Mission's annual Coat Boston drive, as well as other congregational initiatives focused on engaging more deeply with our Boston community.

### **Committee Transitions**

At the beginning of this year, we thanked Marie Hurd for her years of service on the Committee and the way she led the Committee with warmth, skill, and deep connection. During this year, we also said thank you to Beth Nicklas, Ann Rogers, and Donna Matson as they concluded their service on the Committee.

We were also immensely grateful for the thoughtful and steady leadership of Amo Ngoepe, and celebrated with her as she became ordained as the Reverend Amo Ngoepe. With her call to another church, we are grateful to have the support and leadership of Katherine Schofield.

We also thank Nancy Taylor, Helen McCrady, and the Church Council for their leadership, guidance, and support of our Committee's work.

As we took on the Co-Chair roles of this Committee, we connected individually with each member of the Committee to learn more about their path to Old South Church, their hopes and aspirations for the Christian Service & Outreach Committee, and their specific interests and goals for this year. We are grateful to each of our current Committee members for their dedication to this work and the way they each seek justice, love kindness, and walk humbly.

Respectfully submitted,

*Caitlin Callahan and Phil Dearing*

Co-Chairs



## **Christian Service & Outreach Grants, 2021**

Common Cathedral	\$20,000
City Mission Boston	\$20,000
Healthcare Without Walls	\$20,000
Alternatives for Community & Environment	\$20,000
Father's Uplift	\$20,000

## **Other Gifts/Collections/Grants Awarded**

Allston Brighton Food Pantry	\$9,315
Advent Family Service Project	\$905
Boston AGO Young Musicians Fund—Scared for Good Concert	\$1,495
Cooper Justice Center	\$1,555
Emergency relief—Haiti Earthquake	\$7,220
Emergency relief—Storms	\$2,183
Emergency relief—Parishes Organizing to Welcome Immigrants (Afghan Refugee Support)	\$3,000
Families for Justice as Healing—Robert H. Christiansen Award	\$2,500
Mothers for Justice and Equality—Duane Day Award	\$2,500
Neighbors in Need UCC Collection	\$2,155
One Great Hour of Sharing UCC Collection	\$3790

## **Micah Mission Fund Expenditures**

Snowden Partnership	\$10,000
Together We Thrive—Urban Mission Ministry	\$5,000
Mercy Fund	\$6,000
Theologian in the City	\$6,500
Friends of Boston's Homeless (Mass/Cass Advocacy Support)	\$5,863
Parishes Organizing to Welcome Immigrants (Afghan Refugee Support)	\$5,863
Immigrant Family Services (Haitian Refugee Support)	\$5,863
Middle Passage Exhibit	\$3,531

# Snowden High School Partnership

Like the rest of the world, Snowden High School has had a tough year for students, their families, teachers and staff. January had students returning from the holiday break to remote learning. A large number of students disappeared from enrollment in the school, many leaving the Boston area and traveling to family in their native countries. Many families also faced the challenge of parents and caregivers being front-line and essential workers, leaving students home unsupervised or supported. The support staff and administration worked hard to reach out to students. We were able to offer assistance, delivering laptops and purchasing and delivering hotspots to give students access to the internet.

Through our partnership we were able to continue mentoring 23 students, some more successfully than others. Our mentors connected with students through Zoom, text or phone calls. We also offered tutoring and academic support and some assistance with college essay editing.

We celebrated the end of the school year and graduation in several ways. Seven Old South members worked as chefs, cooks and servers at the end of the year celebration and party in the vacant parking lot across the street from the school. Old South member William Wei was hired for the second year to video tape graduation speeches and the ceremony. We celebrated graduation with the senior class at an in-person ceremony at Fenway Park. A highlight of the ceremony and our partnership was the awarding of new laptops to 10 students who are moving on to higher education. The laptops were a very generous donation by an Old South member and the plan is to make this a yearly award given at graduation.

In July we said good-bye and good wishes to Headmaster Gene Roundtree. Gene moved on from Snowden to become the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Schools. Raquel Martinez, Assistant Headmaster was appointed Interim Headmaster for the current school year. Raquel has worked with our partnership and is very supportive of our work together.

We also said good-bye to Susie Beyl, the Snowden-based mentor coordinator. Susie was the third coordinator we have worked with. Difficulty filling vacant job openings has impacted Snowden, like so many other places. After a few interviews and one candidate being offered the job and turning it down, we are working this fall without a school-based mentor coordinator. I have been working to build relationships with other community-based organizations to find different ways to support Snowden students and staff and to redefine our partnership. We have met with the community outreach department at MGH, had contact with the Hebrew College and student organizations at several different colleges and universities. As we move into 2022, we will continue to explore programs and ways that our partnership can develop during these changing and challenging times.

Respectfully submitted,

**Ralph Watson**  
Volunteer Coordinator



*Ralph Watson with Susie Beyl, Mentor Coordinator  
and Gene Roundtree, Headmaster*

# Climate Crisis Task Force

*Steering Committee: Mary Ann Lape, Chair*

*Carol Boggs, Shayna Gleason, Bev Hanna, Rich Hassinger, Neil Miller, Katherine Schofield (Interim Associate Minister)*

The Climate Crisis Task Force consists of a Steering Committee and three working groups - Environmental Stewardship, Climate Justice and Advocacy, and Climate Communications. The Climate Crisis Steering Committee, appointed by the church's Leadership Committee, helps coordinate and support the work of these groups, while a larger group of Climate Advocates within the church participate in activism addressing the climate crisis.



## Advocacy

The main piece of legislation that the Climate Crisis Task Force advocated for in 2021 was the "Act creating a next-generation roadmap for Massachusetts climate policy," which was signed into law by Gov. Charlie Baker on March 26, 2021. This bill codifies a commitment by the Commonwealth to achieve Net Zero emissions by 2050 and furthers Massachusetts' efforts to combat climate change and protect vulnerable communities. Later in the year the Climate Justice and Advocacy Working Group encouraged the Climate Advocates to support the Green Future Act (H. 3292) and write to MassSave during their comment period to urge increased services to and representation of communities of color, as well as more programs focused on electrifying homes.

The Weymouth Compressor Station remains a concern for us. Through 2021 we encouraged congregation members to express their concerns related to this dangerous and unjust site to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). On January 20, 2022 the FERC examined whether the Weymouth compressor station should be shut down. FERC ultimately ruled that although the compressor station would not have been permitted to be built under current law, they would not revoke approval for the site.

Old South Seminarian Thomas Mitchell served as Chair of the Climate Justice and Advocacy Working group for the first half of the year, and Shayna Gleason stepped up to serve as chair in the second half of the year. Thank you very much to both of them for their commitment and considerable organizational skills.

## Education

We organized a number of Community Hour Forums in 2021, beginning with a session in January about Socially Responsible Investing, an August forum discussing the results of the Small Small Steps Toward A Healthy Planet Survey and a conversation with the Executive Director of the Boston Food Forest Coalition in October. We continue to share weekly Green Tips with the congregation and this year began adding different types of content including recommendations for books and podcasts, and profiles of organizations taking action on climate issues.

In the fall we began to engage the Old South Google Group in discussion around different steps we can all take to decrease our carbon footprints. These online discussions produced some great suggestions and helped to extend our reach beyond current members of the Task Force. One of the most significant changes you can make is to switch to renewable energy. As Old South member Bradford Swing (Dir. of Energy Policy and Programs, City of Boston) has shared with our community before, the City's Community Choice Electricity program provides Boston residents with more affordable greener electricity than Eversource. The time is now to make this important change and help Boston move towards 100% renewable energy.

## Partnerships

One of the Task Force's goals for the year was to build partnerships with other faith communities and organizations. We have been cultivating relationships with Green Teams at King's Chapel, Trinity Church, and Old Cambridge Baptist

Church. In May a few of our members also participated in a meeting of Environmental teams from the Paulist Center, Bethel AME, St. Katherine Drexel and a number of other faith communities around Boston. On October 3, 2021, Old South hosted “Love. Earth. Justice. A Multifaith Service of Prayer, Celebration and Resolve,” organized by MA Interfaith Power and Light, featuring a reflection by Rev. Traci Blackmon and participation by faith leaders from a variety of traditions. Thank you to all who helped make this event possible.

### **Recruitment, Reorganization, and Change**

With the departure of Mary Ann Lape as chair of the Task Force, the Steering Committee has been considering next steps in terms of leadership and perhaps some reorganization. As we move into 2022 we will focus on recruiting some new members to our working groups and Steering Committee. We are also discussing how best to improve the efficiency and sustainability of our work while increasing communication within the Task Force and to the congregation.

Thank you so much to the many members of our Climate Crisis Task Force, from our Climate Advocates to the members of our various working groups, and especially to the Steering Committee: Rich Hassinger, Neil Miller, Shayna Gleason, and Bev Hanna. Special appreciation also goes to Carol Boggs who has stepped away from the Steering Committee after being a part of Old South’s climate work for many years. A huge thank you also to John Lape (a member of the Climate Justice and Advocacy WG) and Mary Ann Lape, who served as the Chair of the Task Force and as such participated in each working group. We are so grateful, especially to Mary Ann who helped get the Task Force started, shaped our sense of mission and continued to encourage the work at every turn.

Respectfully submitted,

*Katherine Schofield*

# Columbarium Committee

*Janet Nolan, Chair*

*Carolyn Arrington, Larry Bowers, Kay Davis, Pam Holland*

*Nancy Taylor (Senior Minister), Helen McCrady (Columbarium Administrator)*



The Columbarium Committee met three times during 2021, once in-person and twice via email.

In April, the Committee members discussed the request for the pre-purchase of memorial leaves for the Memorial Tree in the Elder Columbarium. Said leaf would be purchased by a church member in advance, and inscribed and installed on the tree at the time of the member's death. A discussion of the risks (inflated engraving costs, record keeping for the future)/benefits (peace of mind, emotional connectedness with the church) of pre-payment were reviewed. The Committee voted to accept pre-purchase of a memorial leaf for church members. This action requires 2/3 approval by Council, as an amendment to the Columbarium Rules and Regulations is required. At the April meeting of the Church Council the amendment was approved.

In May we again met via email to follow up with Committee members on any efforts they may be making to advance the cause of anti-racism in our Committee, our church, and our lives. The opportunity offered up by the (G)RACE Speaks Committee for dialogue on the intra-racial church was announced and discussed.

Throughout this year the Committee has been heartened by the reports from the ministerial staff with regards to the public's response to the Memorial Tree. In September, Nancy Taylor reported that recent visitors to our Columbarium have been not only interested, but deeply moved by the Memorial Tree, which displays the names of our early members of African descent. In addition, June Cooper and Nancy have fielded inquiries by First Church Boston and First Church Cambridge as to how we have honored our early African members. They have sent representatives to see our Memorial Tree and are thinking about how to remember their early African members as well.

Our final meeting of the year was in-person, in October. At that time, Helen McCrady provided Committee members with a summary update on the status of additions to the Memorial Tree, sales of niches, and inurnments in the past 18 months, as well as a current financial overview.

## **Columbarium Snapshot as of 12/31/2021**

**Niches in use or reserved** 47 of 82

### **Inurnments in 2021**

Joyce M. Akintola April 22

### **Columbarium Fund Balances**

General Fund \$54,633

Perpetual Care Fund \$25,800

Prepaid Inurnment expenses \$9,100

In other concerns and issues, Committee members agreed that it seems that we are able to conduct our business by meeting three times a year, with the option of meeting more as needed.

It has been an honor to be a part of this tender ministry as it has developed and come to fruition.

Respectfully submitted,

*Janet Nolan*



# Congregational Care & Support

*Karen Hand, Chair*

*Audrey Christianson, Sarah Cowles (Deacon), Judy Fisher, Rich Hassinger*

*Caroline Murray, Tom Ralston (Deacon), Abby Smith, Alice Verhoeven*

*Helen McCrady (Senior Church Administrator), Jess Young Chang (Seminarist)*

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The Congregational Care & Support Team is a subcommittee of the Old South Church Board of Deacons. Our goal is to be responsive to the needs of our church family. We aim to foster a culture of caring for one another among our church members. Our Committee tries to encourage and bring prayerful, empathetic and practical support to members of our church family. In addition to our core Committee, we have many faithful crew members who participate in our outreach to the congregation. Recognizing the personal nature of our ministry, we are respectful and sensitive to the wishes of those to whom we minister. Since the spring of 2020, our meetings have been held virtually. During the pandemic, much of our outreach has shifted to phone, snail mail and email. When we are able to make deliveries and visits, we are careful to follow COVID protocols.

Members of the **Call Crew** are in regular touch with church members who may be homebound, advanced in age or otherwise unable to remain in contact with the church. We have about eight callers and about fifteen callees.

Caroline Murray leads the **Card Crew** who send handwritten cards for a multitude of reasons—to share messages of condolence, sympathy and recovery, marriage, birth, moves, retirement, work accomplishments and awards. This year, Caroline shared over 60 card requests—twice what we get in a typical year! We have about 35 dedicated “cardees” at the ready to share joys and concerns with our church members.

The **Food Crew**, led by Alice Verhoeven provides fresh and frozen meals to people who are recovering from surgery/illness or experiencing household disruptions.

The Committee is grateful and appreciative to Rich Hassinger for providing leadership to the **Caregivers Support group** for the last few years. This group offers support and a needed connection to those caring for others. Rich retired from this role last August. We welcome Rev. Frankie Doolittle, a member of our congregation and a licensed counselor, who is stepping in to gather this group. Those interested in attending are invited to speak with Rev. Katherine Schofield. Donna Matson, a friend of the Committee, sent 10 coffee shop cards and notes to caregivers at Christmas.

The committee supports a **Baby Ministry** by providing an Old South onesie and a handmade baby quilt or knitted blanket. In 2021 we welcomed 12 babies into our congregation!

Our Rev. Ken Orth ran three eight-week sessions of the **Grief Support group** this past year, offering comfort and support for those who have experienced the death of loved ones or friends. In addition, members who have experienced loss receive *Healing After Loss, Daily Meditations for Working Through Grief* by M.W. Hickman.

The committee sent 24 coffee shop cards, along with expressions of support, to Old South college students and high school juniors and seniors. We also plan gifts for our graduating seniors in the spring.

The Committee provides **rides** on an ad hoc basis.

Members and friends of Old South Church who are in need of support or who know of members in need, are encouraged to send that information to [care@oldsouth.org](mailto:care@oldsouth.org). The information reaches the Ministers and the Congregational Care & Support Committee Chair, enabling the team to respond.

Respectfully submitted,

*Karen Hand*

# Finance Committee

*Niels Peetz-Larsen (Chair)*

*Amy Augustine, Bill Bulkeley (Treasurer), Jennifer Keenan, Paul Kuenstner, Ted Wade, Frank Wezniak*

*Nancy Taylor (Senior Minister), Linda Van Praet (Finance & Human Resources Administrator)*

*John Braught (Director of Operations), Helen McCrady (Senior Church Administrator)*

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This year the Finance Committee worked steadily throughout the year to evaluate our 2021 financial performance and to develop the Old South budget for 2022. We look forward to presenting a final budget to Council for approval in February.

Areas of focus for the Finance Committee during the prior year have included:

- Working with the Treasurer and Old South leadership to evaluate how best to account for and manage financial surpluses from past years, with an eye toward maintaining an appropriately conservative financial position while maximizing the impact of Old South's financial and non-financial resources.
- Working with Old South leadership to manage a series of challenges facing the Preschool due to increased competition from local public schools as well as numerous new regulations and enrollment changes brought on by the pandemic.
- Managing and monitoring annual changes in staff benefit and other administrative programs.

The Finance Committee expresses our sincere gratitude to all church staff and volunteers for their efforts to support sound financial management and planning. We especially appreciate the tireless work of Senior Church Administrator Helen McCrady and Accounting and Human Resources Administrator Linda Van Praet.

Respectfully submitted,

*Niels Peetz-Larsen*



*Tracy Keene, Chair*  
*Ros Ford, Tim Harbold, Eliette Hilaire, David O'Malley*  
*Ruth Purtilo, Shelia Randolph, Mercedes Ridao*  
*Deb Washington, Ralph Watson,*  
*June Cooper (Theologian in the City)*  
*Nancy Taylor (Senior Minister)*  
*Amo Ngoepe (Pastoral Resident)*

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As of this writing, we are entering our third year of a global pandemic that has interrupted and disrupted our lives - personally, professionally and, some might even say, spiritually. These times remain unprecedented and, in some cases, irreversible, yet we must remain resilient. The pandemic dictates that we focus on attaining and maintaining our resilient nature as Christians and people of faith. (G)RACE Speaks holds true to this.

During this past year, (G)RACE Speaks Committee members continued to find God's GRACE in "promoting sacred conversations about matters of race." We continued to convene over Zoom throughout the year. We did have a moment in time where we gathered in the fall of 2021 at Ruth Purtilo's house for a committee retreat. Sharing a meal together brought not only nourishment but also nourished our souls. We were able to use a hybrid model for those that were not able to attend to join us via Zoom. At this retreat, we reflected on how COVID-19 has changed how we should carry out our mission and how we must continue to offer sacred conversations. While things have indeed changed, we are a resilient group of people that adapted to the work we had done and to the work we will be doing in the coming year.

We continued to expand our understanding through our teachings and through our educational opportunities. Looking back on the previous months, we reflected on what we accomplished. The guiding tenet of (G)RACE Speaks is to not only have hard conversations about matters of race and racism but to educate and advance learning on such matters. In February 2021, our work to honor Black History Month featured a poster on the corner of the church that lifted and spotlighted the 1,298 names of Black Americans that had been killed by police officers in the line of duty since 2015. It was a somber display that the Committee hoped would have an impact on those who paused to learn, mourn, and reflect upon these names. During worship services that month, we held Black History Moments to educate people on the Bay State Banner, a newspaper of the Black community; we heard from the daughter of Paul Parks, the first Black Secretary of Education in MA; we uplifted Muriel Snowden and our ever-growing relationship with our neighbor, Snowden International School; and we heard from and learned of the important work of African-American member, Paula Hammond, who is the Head of the Department of Chemical Engineering at MIT.

In the spring, we launched, in collaboration with Christian Formation, discussion groups to better understand and learn of the racial wealth gap and the importance of supporting black-owned businesses and vendors. We were pleased to have provided this conversation in that the Board of Trustees deposited \$250,000 in One United Bank, the largest Black-owned bank in America. We continued to advocate for church members to consider opening up accounts with this bank and otherwise supporting Black-owned businesses when able.

Other educational opportunities found (G)RACE Speaks partnering again with Christian Formation and also City Mission to offer panel discussions on two documentaries focused on the Black Church in America. The congregation was invited to watch George Nierenberg's 1982 documentary, *Say Amen, Somebody!*, and the PBS broadcast of Dr. Henry Louis Gates's series, *The Black Church: This Is Our Story, This Is Our Song*. After each viewing, we gathered to discuss the impact of the Black Church in America and the roots of Black music. We plan to offer more opportunities in the future, particularly around the influence spirituals and gospel music have in the white church.

In April, Committee members Deb Washington and Ruth Purtilo, submitted a proposal titled "God's Table: An Anti-racism Curriculum to Better Understand Racial Inclusion" to the National Race Amity Centenary Celebration Conference. While this proposal was not accepted for the conference, we now have another resource in our toolkit to offer education around racial inclusion. Educating our members and congregation around matters of race continues to be at our forefront. We offered our Anti-Racism curriculum over Zoom to another 50 people over the summer, hoping that the deep and honest conversation that participants offered in the sessions gave them the understanding of the connection between racism and other forms of oppression. We look forward to presenting the

curriculum in the winter of 2022 to another cohort to provide them with tools to use the *Fruits of the Spirit* to eliminate all forms of bias, prejudice and racism.

During the month of August, (G)RACE Speaks coordinated a powerful display to commemorate the Middle Passage. *The Middle Passage Installation of Remembrance* saw a large banner (17' x 5') prominently hung on the exterior of Old South Church that featured the image of human persons packed as cargo into a ship. Juxtaposed to this cruel, dehumanizing practice were bold images—faces and families—of those who might be the descendants of enslaved persons, or what these persons might have looked like before having been enslaved. The installation included a map showing the Triangular Trade Route over which captive people were transported and sold. It was accompanied with sound effects of waves, wind, gulls calling, timber creaking, chains rattling, and humans humming.

As part of our own educational undertakings, (G)RACE Speaks has begun to learn about reparations. We want to better equip ourselves on how we can lift up the topic of reparations and provide a context for broader and church-wide education opportunities on this contentious subject. By doing a committee read of *Reparations: A Christian Call for Repentance and Repair*, by Duke L. Kwon and Gregory Thompson (2021), the Committee will spend dedicated time in committee meetings discussing chapters. Once concluded, we will engage others in conversations and discussions by offering forums and panel presentations on reparations. We know that this will be a difficult and hard discussion, but it will be grounded in our need to have such sacred conversations with members of the congregation.

(G)RACE Speaks will continue our partnership with City Mission and the Rev. June Cooper Justice Center by supporting their Green Book Tours and the Pilgrimage to Montgomery and Selma (if 2022 allows such). We also look forward to this year's sponsorships of the annual Phillis Wheatley Sunday on May 8, 2022, where we will present the Open Door Award to Rev. Dr. Emmitt Price, III. We will be exploring partnerships with a local Black church to host an event to celebrate Juneteenth on June 19, 2022.

We are steadfast in upholding our mission of:

*Affirming the God-given dignity of every human person, (G)RACE SPEAKS shall promote sacred conversations about matters of race within the life of Old South Church. (G)RACE SPEAKS shall foster diversity awareness throughout the church with the goal of becoming proficient at protecting the dignity of self and others. Reliance on the Seven Gifts of the Spirit—Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Knowledge, Fortitude, Piety and Wonder—grounds (G)RACE SPEAKS in biblical and theological language and thought. This is a Christian undertaking.*

We will continue to expand our understanding through teachings and educational opportunities. We will continue to bring members of our congregation and various people from all walks of life, to have an awareness of diversity, racial inequality, and economic injustice. For it is a Christian undertaking!

Respectfully submitted,

**Tracy Keene**



# Leadership Committee

*David Becker, Chair*

*Carolyn Arrington, Priscilla Geigis (Trustee)*

*Jer Jurma (Deacon), Susan Navia (Deacon), Katie Maliel, David Story*

*Nancy Taylor (Senior Minister), Katherine Schofield (Interim Associate Minister)*

*Shawn Fiedler (Acting Associate Minister), Helen McCrady (Senior Church Administrator)*

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The leadership committee is responsible for developing a slate of candidates for election to church offices at the annual meeting of the congregation. Given the amazing talents of the folks of the church, and their willingness to serve, along with the organizing skills of Church Administrator Helen McCrady we have prepared a ballot with the great breadth and depth of talent to which Old South is accustomed.

As directed by Church Council, the Leadership Committee also recruited and vetted three teams to support the transition of our senior minister: Celebration, Interim and Transition. The fourth team, a Search Committee is planned to be formed in the Spring of 2022.

Accompanying this report, we present to the congregation our slate for all offices to be elected at annual meeting. Some offices have multi-year terms, some committees have staggered terms for members. The year listed after nominees indicates the last full year of that person's proposed term.

May God continue to bless the great work of the leaders of Old South Church in Boston.

## Officers

Phil Stern, Moderator, 2022

Bill Bulkeley, Treasurer, 2022

Rob Gabler, Clerk, 2022

Kate Silfen, Historian, 2022

## Deacons

Jonathan Aleshire, 2024

Amy Coe, 2024

Cristine Del Favero, 2024

Sara Donahue, 2024

Kathy Hassinger, 2024

Leclerc Jean-Louis, 2024

## Council At Large

Brad Swing, At-Large 2024

Ralph Watson, At-Large 2024

## Trustees

Ashton Goodfield, 2024

Debby Kuenstner, 2024

Manuel Navia, 2024

## Standing Committee Chairs

David Connaughton—Membership, 2024

Marie Hurd—Music, 2024

Tracy Keene—(G)RACE Speaks, 2024

Lisa Loveland—Operations, 2024

Janet Nolan—Columbarium, 2024

Niels Peetz-Larsen—Finance, 2024

## Leadership Committee

Carolyn Arrington, 2024

Respectfully submitted,

**David Becker**



# Membership Committee

*David Connaughton, Chair*

*Rubén Bonilla Santiago, Kira Connaughton, Anne Dearing, Christine Del Favero (Deacon)  
Leclerc Jean-Louis, Candace Kosturko, Dorothy Messenger, Susan Navia (Deacon), Abby Smith  
Nancy Taylor (Senior Minister), Katherine Schofield (Interim Associate Minister)  
Shawn Fiedler (Acting Associate Minister), Amo Ngoepe (Pastoral Resident)*

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The COVID-19 pandemic continued throughout 2021. Despite multiple efforts to begin more in-person and face to face worship and similar events, the virus continued to mutate and spread. This severely limited the return to normal for the church and continued to slow momentum as far as new member joining as well as member engagement. Joining and engagement are critical for continued membership in the church body.

In light of this continued pandemic status, the Membership Committee faced big challenges in this second year of pandemic. Due to the continued primarily virtual worship model, new visitor interest in membership continues to be very low. As such, Old South added 28 new members in 2021, compared to 24 in 2020, 56 in 2019, and 48 in 2018.

Weekly attendance does remain high, due in large part to virtual services allowing easy “attendance” without having to leave home. Also, the ability to view services after their initial live presentation also increases availability to those who view worship later in the week. The virtual worship continues to allow Old South to reach a very broad audience with its message of affirming and inclusive Christianity. Many regions throughout the country do not have local churches with this message.

This year’s attempts at drawing the church body into the physical church have been partially successful but have met with predictable challenges. At the same time that the initial church reopening was planned, the more infectious delta variant surged and caused a more limited reopening. People have also gotten used to virtual worship and many prefer it to in-person (while many others do not find virtual worship very useful).

The Committee continues to work to strengthen the existing membership community that we have. This included multiple all-church calling campaigns (one in the spring, and one in the fall) to reach out to our existing members. We found that unlike last year, members were less interested and receptive to these calls. We will return to a single calling campaign in 2022. New members who joined in 2021 were also contacted and engaged to help strengthen their connection with the community. Further, we experimented with “micro-communities” as a way to provide a simple text or email-based group to answer weekly questions. The goal of these micro-communities is to further engage and connect church members.

Respectfully Submitted,

*David Connaughton*

# Music Committee

*Sam Ou, Chair*

*Jonathan Aleshire (Deacon), Steve Chong, Marcia Gregg, Kathy Hassinger, Tobias Herrmann,*

*Jimmy Kamel, Carly Kinney, Bob Kosturko (Choir), Tony Rich (Deacon)*

*Mitchell Crawford (Minister of Music), George Sargeant (Choirmaster & Associate Organist)*

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There were various goals that the Old South Music Committee wanted to achieve in the year 2021, but alas, the best-laid plans go astray, especially in a pandemic year full of transitions. With a hope of restarting our pre-pandemic assessment of our Sanctuary audio system once the church transitioned to in-person worship services in September (and the reconvening of the Festival Choir...hooray!!), we were nonetheless unfortunately informed that the Old South staff was understandably stretched to their limits due to the difficulties of adapting to hybrid model worship services. As such, we were dissuaded from pursuing the audio system reassessment any further. Instead, we focused our attention on trying to support our in-house music ensembles by meeting with Gospel Choir Director Tim Harbold and Old South Ringers Director Peter Coulombe, respectively. As limited as our capacity was in helping them, we still encouraged them to pursue their individual goals with our moral backing. Tim was able to secure funds to hire a tenor soloist for the Gospel Choir, further adding to the rich sonority of his ensemble. He also addressed regular collaborations between the Festival and Gospel Choirs as a beautiful possibility for our future, post-pandemic worship services. As for Peter, replacing curtain rods in the choir/bell loft would go a long way towards visually presenting the Ringers in a better light once they reclaim that space for future worship services. New microphones that Peter also requested to better enhance the recordings of the Ringers were regrettably tabled along with the audio system reassessment.

Discussing the future of children's music programming at Old South, Minister of Music Mitchell Crawford recommended "Growing in Grace", a repertoire-focused children's music curriculum designed to foster understanding of basic music concepts as well as age-appropriate theology. This recommendation, like many casualties of the pandemic, has been shelved due to the uncertainty of children safely gathering to sing together, coupled with Children's Choir Director Amy Budka having retired over the summer. We further discussed the topic with Kate Nintcheu, Director of Children & Family Ministries. However, aside from identifying various scheduling issues that prevented the development of a coherent children's music program, no solutions have yet been implemented.

Extensive discussions regarding Old South's antiracist agenda have led to ideas of a choir-exchange program with local black churches. Of course, the pandemic continues to hamper the progress of this idea, but hopefully such an idea, if established, can help bridge the divide between our predominantly white church and congregations with more people of color, especially in a post-pandemic world. Another antiracist idea (thanks to Betsy Ragan) involves restitution/reparations work for singing Black spirituals at Old South Church services. (G)RACE Speaks is reportedly delving into this matter. Potentially collecting money during the offertory for "royalties" during services when we sing these spirituals, and then donating those proceeds to programs that support black musicians, composers, and/or black youth in music is an intentionally reflective way to repay the enslaved ancestors of our brutal past who were never compensated for their contributions to our rich musical body of sacred music. As the Music Committee, we decided to take (G)RACE Speaks' lead on this and support them in whatever needs to be done to further this important work.

As musical activities at Old South continue to be hampered by the pandemic, our Committee still met regularly to check up on each other and make sure that we were each enduring as best as we could. We are pleased with our All-Church Worship services, whether in-person or online, as they continue to be edifying and heartfelt. Reflecting upon enhancing the online worship experience has led to discussions of improving and incorporating more subtitles of all the music sung during services so that worshippers can better follow along and participate more fully, whether by singing out loud or merely through comprehension of the words being sung.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Sam Ou**

# Operations Committee

*Lisa Loveland, Chair*

*Lois Corman, Kurt Gaertner, Sean O'Donnell, Sue Pepin, Grace Rousseau, John Salo, John Stainton*

*Nancy Taylor (Senior Minister), John Braught (Director of Operations), Helen McCrady (Senior Church Administrator)*

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The focus of the Operation Committee in 2021 has undoubtedly been on the nearly two-million-dollar tower restoration project. With our architects, Wiss, Janey, Elstner and Associates and our masonry contractor Spillane we embarked on this project in late spring. The first part of the project saw the construction of scaffolding that twisted its way up the tower via many of our various roof surfaces. The design and construction of the scaffolding was quite complicated and led to a delay in the start of the project. The completed scaffolding is covered by a beautiful scrim that announced Old South's message of love to passersby. As of the writing of this report, the bell tower portion of the restoration has been completed and the scaffolding has been removed from that portion of the tower. The corner reconstructions of the main part of the tower are in full swing. The project is expected to be completed in March of 2022 with the scaffolding coming down early in April.

This project was funded through our Capital Reserve Fund and did not require any additional funding through the operating budget or through donations from the congregation. The Operations Committee is grateful for the financial planning that went in to ensuring that major renovations like this project will be funded into the future. We are also grateful to the City of Boston for the \$150,000 grant for this project from the Community Preservation Act.

Some other projects that the committee monitored this year included:

- Draperies for Mary Norton Hall
- Improved cybersecurity
- Using GBIO's Community Purchasing Alliance to select a new waste disposal contractor
- Repairs to a leak affecting the organ in the Gordon Chapel
- Waterproofing the basement level of the elevator due to water infiltration
- Steeple lighting

Upcoming Projects:

- We will revisit our plans for energy conservation through the unified controls project
- Conversion of remaining lighting to LED
- Modular staging for the Chancel

This Committee, however, cannot take credit for most of these projects. Credit goes to our Director of Operations, John Braught and Senior Administrator, Helen McCrady. It is their hard work that ensures this building runs smoothly every day. Lastly, we must also thank the administrative and custodial staff for all of their incredibly hard work. Old South cannot continue to provide the myriad of services to both the congregation and the community at large without the continued dedication of this staff. Thank you!

Respectfully Submitted,

*Lisa G. Loveland*

# Stewardship Committee

*Kathy Wade, Chair*

*Brenda Gailhouse, Ashton Goodfield, Todd Krohne, Nancy Kukulan*

*Scott McInturff, Vicki Newman (Pledge Secretary), Peter Stokes*

*Nancy Taylor (Senior Minister), Helen McCrady (Senior Church Administrator)*

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The proverb, “when the going gets tough, the tough get going,” could not be more apt for how our congregation responded financially to help the church meet the challenges that it faced in 2021. We launched our January Stewardship Campaign during the then highest point of COVID-19 illnesses, hospitalizations and death. All church services and other gatherings were held remotely and the future remained uncertain. Yet, the generosity of our congregation in that time of peril was awe-inspiring.

In our campaign, we were asked to consider *kairos*, a Greek word found in the New Testament, a word for a season ripe with both crisis and opportunity, both peril and possibility. In response to being faced with crisis and peril, we chose opportunity and possibility. Pledges and giving throughout the year exceeded our most optimistic hopes. On Consecration Sunday, as part of our online celebration, we made “word clouds” sharing hopes, as well as concerns, for the future.

In 2021, fewer member households pledged than in the previous year, but the total amount pledged exceeded that of the previous year by over 8%. And, on top of that, many gave more than they had initially pledged. The total income received in 2021 from those who pledged was over \$1,202,000, exceeding pledges by over \$42,600, and topping total income from pledges in 2020 by over \$83,000. Such generosity! See below for more detail regarding 2021 pledges and pledge income.

In November, we hosted a Community Hour Forum led by Rev. Taylor showing the sources and uses of our annual income and why member support is critical to the life of the church. Further, in bulletins we shared a summary of the levels of giving to help inform members as they contemplate future pledges.

As part of our Stewardship campaign in January, we were blessed with inspirational and personal stories from our reflectors who shared why they give to the church. Thank you to each of them who made it clear why we should care about joining with others to support our mission of *Mercy, Justice and Beauty*.

Lastly, I want to give a heartfelt thank you to the dedicated members of the Stewardship Committee, whose names are above, as well as to Rev. Taylor and Helen McCrady. Their labors and inspiration made all of this happen.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kathy Wade*

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## 2021 Stewardship Select Facts and Figures

- 57% (277 out of 484) of our member households pledged in 2021
- A total of \$1,159,843 was pledged in 2021 and a total of \$1,202,490 was received, exceeding pledges by \$42,647
- The average pledge amount was \$3,879 (up \$500 from 2020) and the median pledge was \$2,000 (also up \$500 from 2020)
- 237 households either increased their annual commitment or maintained the same level as last year, while 31 households decreased their annual commitment
- 21 new households pledged in 2021 and 10 returned to our pledge rolls
- 40% of our new members pledged in 2021
- 22 non-member households pledged in 2021

# Planned Giving Committee

*Cathryn Griffith, Chair*

*Ruth Edens, Bev Hanna, Mary Kohák, Larry Soper-Mynatt*

*Nancy Taylor (Senior Minister)*

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The Planned Giving Committee's task is to encourage members to establish end-of-life plans, to educate members on options for such plans, and to express gratitude to people who have made bequests to Old South Church.

This Committee provides information on the importance of having a will, a healthcare proxy, etc. We welcome and encourage members to provide for the future financial well-being of the church in their end-of-life plan, when appropriate. People who notify Old South Church that they have made such provisions automatically become members of the Mary Norton Society, which has grown significantly in recent years.

The Planned Giving Committee traditionally hosts two events a year.

**Informational event in the Spring:** The Planned Giving Committee hosts a forum when lawyers answer questions about estate planning. The theme this year was "Planning for the end of life is a sacred process." For several weeks before this event on May 16, 2021, it was publicized on the Sunday morning streamed worship service. Senior Minister Nancy Taylor opened the gathering, Seminarian Thomas Mitchell talked about death as a sacred event — "Making a plan is the last act of caring for those you will leave behind" — and then attorneys Larry Bowers and Rick Kraft fielded questions about legal matters. About 25 people joined the call, the conversation lasted a full hour, and there were many thoughtful questions.

**Appreciation event in the Fall:** The Planned Giving Committee hosts an annual event with an entertaining and/or informational program for members of the Mary Norton Society. This year, the event was held on November 17, 2021 (postponed from October due to a playoff series involving the Boston Red Sox). Again this year, it was a virtual event. The program focused on the Old South Church tower, which is undergoing repairs. "The New Tower of Old South Church" poem by Charles L. H. Wagner was read by church members, then Lorry Spitzer gave a presentation on the history of the tower and John Braught talked and showed images of the current restoration project. The evening's event ended with photographs of the tower collected on the internet.

The committee thanks Nancy Taylor for her guidance and many contributions to our work, and Helen McCrady for her quiet dedication to administering the Mary Norton Society records, responding to people who seek information about planned gifts to Old South Church, coordinating arrangements when bequests are received and maintaining the official records of the Mary Norton Society.

Respectfully submitted,

*Cathryn Griffith*



# Mary Norton Society

*Bill Adams & Marilyn Jackson Adams*

*Doug Anderson*

*Earl Anspach*

*Carolyn Arrington*

*Jim Asp*

*David Becker & Rock Ripple*

*Jay Blackwell*

*Elizabeth Blake*

*Sherry Blanchette*

*Carol Boggs*

*Paul Brouillette & Neil Miller*

*William and Debra Bulkeley*

*Roger & Maddie Burke*

*Margaret Bush*

*Laurence Carson*

*Steve Chong*

*Emily & Rodney Click*

*Allison Cooley*

*Jennifer Craig*

*Dwight Crane*

*Ginny Crane*

*James & Linda Crawford*

*Deborah Davis*

*Kathryn Davis*

*Christine Del Favero*

*Miriam Erick*

*Judy Fisher*

*Brigitte Fletcher*

*Robert Gabler*

*Calvin Genzel*

*Charles & Renate Gerlinger*

*Cathryn Griffith & Curtiss Reed*

*Mike & Karen Hand*

*Beverly Hanna*

*Timothy Harbold & Bradford Swing*

*Deborah Harder*

*Hilary Harley*

*Joanne Herman*

*Erin Hull*

*Mary Hunter*

*Marie Hurd*

*Linda Jenkins*

*Vard Johnson & Ruth Purtilo*

*Jennifer Keenan*

*David King*

*Karen Klockner*

*Mary Kohák*

*Deborah & Paul Kuenstner*

*Mary Ann & John Lape*

*Lisa Loveland*

*Beth Luckenbach*

*Mary Luti*

*Shawn McCartee*

*Helen McCrady*

*Scott McInturff & Pamela Roberts*

*Vicki Newman*

*Janet Nolan*

*Dan Oates*

*Meredith & Niels Peetz-Larsen*

*Ely & Judie Pierce*

*Elizabeth Pitcher*

*Beatrice Pitcher*

*Anne Pritchard & Ann Marie Bourque*

*Diane Raymond*

*Rory S. Razon*

*Peter & Suzanne Read*

*Nancy Richardson*

*Ruth Ricker*

*Mercedes Ridao*

*Annamarie Ross Shu*

*Kate Silfen*

*Tish Simmons & Kelly Wright*

*Betty Smith*

*Larry & Paul Soper-Mynatt*

*Megan Staley*

*Kay Stamp*

*David Story*

*Nancy Taylor*

*Alice Verhoeven*

*Kathleen & Ted Wade*

*John Wadlington*

*Ralph Watson*

*John Weingartner*

*Don Wells*

*Karin Wetmore*

*Frank Wezniak & Nan Tull*

*Richard & Elinor Yeo*

*Anna Yoder*

# Our Faith, Our Time, Our Future

## The Campaign for Old South Church

### 2021 Update

In April of 2016 Old South emerged from a two-year process of discernment and called upon members and friends to support future ministries of Justice, Mercy, and Walking with God. An ambitious campaign to raise funds for three permanent endowments and upgrades to increase accessibility in the buildings was undertaken.

At the end of 2020 the total number of Campaign commitments was 207, totaling \$4.23 million.

- 182 of 207 commitments have been completed.
- Future expected payments total \$11,000.

#### As of December 31, 2021:

Total Funds In (2016-2021)	\$4,227,418
Campaign Expenses (2021)	\$157
Ministry/Program Access Expenses (2021)	\$6747

#### Funds Added to Endowment from Campaign

#### Value December 31, 2021

Micah Mission Fund	\$1,153,239	\$1,657,345
Open Door Productions	\$1,103,739	\$1,585,664
Teaching Church	\$324,319	\$ 464,967
General Endowment	\$750,000	**

*\*\*See Trustee report for General Endowment value as of 12.31.21.*

#### Ministry, Program, Access Improvements

New drapes and proscenium in Mary Norton Hall (item included in original Campaign case statement)

#### Bank balances as of 12.31.21

For ongoing expenses and future investment	\$6,930
Ministry/Program/Access	\$112,179

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The 2022 operating budget will reflect endowment payouts from the three permanent funds created by the Capital Campaign.

- Micah Mission \$53,482  
*Outreach and Justice Initiatives*
- Open Door Productions \$51,150  
*Spreading Old South's message locally and globally*
- The Teaching Church \$15,004  
*Supporting initiatives in our Christian Formation programs*

## Baptisms (Children) in 2021

Norah Diane Killelea	February 14, 2021
Wesley David Burke	May 16, 2021
Hyunjoon Casimir Mussman	September 12, 2021
James Douglas Lucca	December 5, 2021

## Weddings in 2021

Xueyang Fang and Yunpeng Yu	April 1, 2021
Nicholas Foster Price and Maya Khezam	April 26, 2021
Xin Wei and Libo Tang	May 22, 2021
Huixian Allissa Zhang and Yuyi Jerry Wei	May 23, 2021
Corey Michael Carr and Sarah Elizabeth Lipocky	May 30, 2021
Janice Anne Iwama and David Donald Pelissier	June 12, 2021
Mike Haiyu Bao and Jenny Zhao Cheng	June 26, 2021
Leilani Bauson Caliguiran and Christopher Erick Lunde	July 9, 2021
Jasmine Marie Browne and Laura Marie Lambert	August 20, 2021
Elizabeth Jane Cox and Adam Michael Ritter	August 27, 2021
Martha Schick and Gregory William Norman Townsend	September 4, 2021
Kelli Marie Savia and David Edmund Hudon	September 5, 2021
Katherine Jeein Seo and Neville Sun	September 12, 2021
Siddharth Eapen George and Neha Georgie	September 18, 2021
Allie Kreider and Philip Landry	September 25, 2021
Jaclyn Rose Keshian and Paul William Jester	October 2, 2021
Helen Tian and Josh Buckman	October 9, 2021
Lauren Berk and Alyse Wheelock	October 23, 2021
Kristin DiBlasi and Andrew Becker	November 5, 2021
Samantha Meagan Chin and Mina Farag	November 6, 2021
William Luke Nelson and Donnelle Andre Reed Miller	November 21, 2021
David Bao-Long Duong and Ian Harrison Stanley	December 19, 2021
John Roy Lenkowski and Marissa Catherine Dalferro	December 31, 2021

# Members Received and Removed in 2021

## Members Received

### By Confession of Faith

John Thomas Sanders

### By Letter of Transfer

Emma Grace Brewer-Wallin  
Mary E. Cresse  
Catherine Marie DeJager  
Nancy Ellen Lane  
Romona Leibnitz  
Donnelle Miller Milson  
William Luke Milson

### By Reaffirmation of Faith

Kevin P. Kish  
Melissa Kay Payne  
Priscilla Brazell  
Letitia Dragonette  
Neil Edmund Dugas  
Alexandra Sage Kennedy  
Yoo-Kyung Kim  
Kory Markel  
Paula Cohan Markel  
Elizabeth Susan Only  
Gail Frances Holman  
Christopher Joseph Smith  
Marianna Bora Spera  
Cameron James Sweeney  
Sean Witty

### As Associate

Pamela Jessie Cole  
Adam D. McAllister  
Aaron F. McPherson  
Amy Lankenau McPherson  
Elizabeth Park Roberts

### From Associate to Full Member

Thomas Neil Ralston

## Total Members In – 29

## Members Removed

### By Letter of Transfer

Laura M. Connors

### By Request

Aubrey Rose Boruck-Fried  
Ryan Fried  
Dorian Campbell  
Katherine Campbell  
Katherine Engstrom  
Christine Karen Harris  
Robert Joseph Charest  
Emily Yulu Charest  
John Harwood  
Andra Kristen Skaalrud

### By Death

Joyce Akintola  
John T. Bybee  
Sarah Wulff

## Total Members Out—14

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### *Old South Membership*

*as of 12/31/2021*

**Individuals—663**

**Households—484**

## Ministers and Staff

Nancy S. Taylor, *Senior Minister*  
Katherine A. Schofield, *Interim Associate Minister*  
Shawn M. Fiedler, *Acting Associate Minister*  
James W. Crawford, *Senior Minister Emeritus*  
Amo Ngoepe, *Pastoral Resident* ✧ Mitchell Crawford, *Minister of Music*  
Kate M. Nintcheu, *Director of Children & Family Ministries*  
jessica young chang, *seminarian*  
Ken Orth, *Healing Worship Minister*  
June R. Cooper, *Theologian in the City* ✧ Donald A. Wells, *Theologian in Residence*  
David Story, *Wedding Outreach Minister*  
Karen Hand, *Wedding Hostess*  
Summer Marsh, *Old South Preschool Director*  
Tim Harbold, *Gospel Choir Director* ✧ Peter Coulombe, *Old South Ringers Director*  
George Sargeant, *Associate Organist & Choirmaster*  
Willie Sordillo, *Jazz Worship Music Director*  
Martha Schick, *Youth & Young Adult Leader*  
  
John Braught, *Director of Operations*  
Helen McCrady, *Senior Church Administrator* ✧ Alex Pickering, *Administrative Assistant*  
Jamie Garuti, *Director of Multimedia* ✧ Linda Van Praet, *Finance & Human Resources Administrator*  
Corey Spence, *Weekday Receptionist*  
Shirley Bivins, George Sargeant, *Evening and Weekend Receptionists*  
Emily Ross, *Archivist*  
Elias Perez, *Senior Sexton* ✧ David Brode, *Saturday/Sunday Sexton*  
Richard Serebour, *Daytime Sexton* ✧ Ozoemena Nwodo, *Evening Sexton*

## Officers

Phil Stern, *Moderator*  
Rob Gabler, *Clerk*  
Bill Bulkeley, *Treasurer*  
Kate Silfen, *Historian*

## Board Chairs

Paul Brouillette and Susan Navia, *Senior Deacons*  
Kristi Geary, *Board of Trustees Chair*

## Council Committee Chairs

Cathryn Griffith, *Planned Giving*  
Tim Longman, *Christian Formation* ✧ Lisa Loveland, *Operations*  
Niels Peetz-Larsen, *Finance* ✧ David Connaughton, *Membership*  
Tracy Keene, *(G)RACE Speaks* ✧ Janet Nolan, *Columbarium*  
Sam Ou, *Music* ✧ Caitlan Callahan & Phil Dearing, *Christian Service & Outreach*  
David Becker, *Leadership* ✧ Kathy Wade, *Stewardship*

## Deacons Committee Chairs

Karen Hand, *Congregational Care & Support*

## Special Task Force & Committee Chairs

Mary Ann Lape, *Climate Crisis Steering Committee*



# Old South Church 2021 Annual Report Appendix

## Voices from a Pandemic

### Ministry During a Pandemic

#### **An Interview with Kate Nintcheu, Director of Children & Family Ministries, April 1, 2020**

*Kate has been Director of Children & Family Ministries at Old South since 2014.*

Kate has found new ways to run Old South's Church School during this unprecedented time. She is proud of the way the Church School teachers have readily "jumped into the unknown" by recording themselves teaching over video capture software. The middle school classes watch educational videos and have virtual meetings. Children in the preschool and elementary classes have been learning a new story about Jesus each week. Each child is invited to create something that tells the story by using the media of their choice. The children have submitted drawings, maps, and short videos to their teachers.

Kate has also been busy launching a Facebook support group for Church School parents. She uses this Facebook page as a medium for sharing faith-based encouragement and spiritual resources for families. This page also serves as an informal, virtual gathering place for parents to share their concerns and offer support to one another. Kate hopes that the Church School helps the children and families maintain some sense of normalcy during this unprecedented time. "As long as we are stuck at home, we will continue to have church school every week," said Kate.

#### **An Interview with Martha Schick, Youth & Young Adults Ministry Leader, April 19, 2020**

*Martha is the Youth & Young Adults Ministry Leader at the Old South Church. She is a seminarian in-care and attends Boston University School of Theology*

Martha said that the two groups she works with have been uniquely affected by the coronavirus pandemic. For members of the Youth Group, this represents a complete disruption of their social lives, because much of their socialization happens when they are physically attending school. The Young Adults (in their 20's and 30's), are often unpartnered and are either living alone or with a roommate. For those that live alone, the social distancing means a great deal of isolation. Those that live with a roommate have the challenge of living in close quarters with someone all hours of the day.

Martha's goal is to give both the Youth Group and the Young Adults a place to find fellowship and give them a safe space to express their concerns. She has temporarily stopped following a specific curriculum for the youth group during their Sunday morning sessions, and instead gives them time to check-in with one another, pray together, and play games. Martha offers a weekly virtual "happy hour" for the Young Adults to gather and talk. A few of the Young Adults are working on the front lines of the pandemic, and the weekly happy hours gives them a time to express their fears and frustrations.

The Young Adults had a "church lock-in" scheduled for the end of March. While this could not happen in-person, Martha offered a virtual "lock-in." Fifteen young adults attended, and enjoyed a variety of fun activities. They watched Katherine Schofield's video on building an altar, and everyone had the opportunity to discuss what their own altars would look like. Afterwards, they enjoyed watching "Ferris Bueller's Day Off" together. "Things can't be the same," said Martha, "so my philosophy is to give everyone something to look forward to."

#### **An Interview with Shawn Fiedler, Acting Associate Minister, May 22, 2020**

*The Reverend Shawn Fiedler has been serving as Old South's Acting Associate Minister since September of 2019. Shawn's ministry is focused on the worship life of the congregation, membership, and evangelism. He has previously served at Old South as Ministerial Intern from 2011-2012, and then Pastoral Resident from 2012-2013.*

The arrival of the COVID-19 virus in Boston has transformed the ministry of the Reverend Shawn Fiedler. In the first weeks of March, there were a number of changes that felt quite big. Members could no longer shake hands during the passing of the peace or drink from cups during communion. But when Old South closed its physical doors, suddenly these changes seemed small. The staff had to think more deeply about what was essential about our life

together as a congregation, and this meant rethinking how we observe the traditional rituals that help shape worship. “What became essential is connection,” said Shawn, “and that has shifted my ministry dramatically.”

Old South’s means of connecting the community has been made possible by technology such as live streaming worship, recorded videos, Zoom meetings, and PowerPoints. Shawn has taken over the logistics of this new style of ministry, and this has meant learning new technologies at a fast pace. He can no longer use the Church’s white boards to illustrate points during his Thursday evening Bible Study. Instead he prepares digital PowerPoints in advance of the gatherings. “Everything takes longer now,” said Shawn. “Most of my time is spent being a video producer and editor. I am used to our ministry being in-person, and I have to remind myself that this is still ministry.”

When asked how these events have impacted his spiritual life, Shawn answered, “I find my faith in worship on Sunday mornings.” In order to cultivate that sense of being part of an in-person worship service, Shawn takes two walks a day to the Monastery of the Society of Saint John the Evangelist in Cambridge. He stands outside the monastery when the monks are worshiping, and this gives him a space to “check-in with God twice a day.”

While delivering virtual worship services and ministry has been a challenge, Shawn said: “I have been held by watching the growth and impact of our ministry. God has called us to offer beauty outside our four walls in a way we haven’t before.”

### **An Interview with Willie Sordillo, Jazz Ensemble Director, June 16, 2020**

*Willie Sordillo has been the Director of Old South’s Jazz Ensemble since the Jazz Worship began in 2005.*

Willie Sordillo says that the pandemic has brought a new intensity to his work as Music Coordinator for Jazz Worship, and preparing the service is truly a team effort. He begins preparing for each service about ten days in advance. Willie begins the ten day process by first selecting a repertoire to match what he describes as the “vibe of the moment.” He then prepares the musical arrangements to give to the musicians who take part in the service. In the next four days, each musician records tracks in their own home which they then upload to a Google Drive to share with the next musician to record their track. Willie then mixes these tracks and crafts them into a video. The minister who is preaching that week adds their reflection to the video. Jamie Garuti and William Wei work with the video to incorporate images and graphics. “We have all had to learn new skills,” said Willie, “and I think the way we use technology is forever changed.” As interesting as this process has been, Willie says that he does miss the spontaneity and creativity that comes from interacting with the musicians in-person.

Reflecting on this challenging time, Willie says: “Zoë [Krohne] and I feel that we have been preparing for this all our lives. This is what we have been called to do. I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute something that I hope is meaningful for people.”

### **An Interview with Amo Ngoepe, Pastoral Resident, June 25, 2020**

*Amo Ngoepe has been Old South Church’s Pastoral Resident since the fall of 2019. Amo’s ministry includes helping to lead Jazz Worship and social justice initiatives which include the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization, and (G)RACE Speaks.*

Amo Ngoepe says that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a big impact on her daily work life. Because Old South has been having pre-recorded online services for many months now, she and her colleagues have had to learn to fit recording work into their day, and this has been time consuming. Getting ready to record is a ritual by itself, and this has required a great deal of vocal toning work. Amo spends more time preparing her liturgy because it is now being recorded. She also notes that Zoom “does something different to your energy; it is a different level of exhaustion.”

Although her work is more time-consuming than it was before COVID-19 came to Boston, Amo has appreciated the deeper level of connection she has experienced with Old South staff and the congregation. During weekly meetings, there is “a deeper level of checking-in; getting to know one another and that has been great.” The violent death of George Floyd has also compelled the church to engage in discussions around race and racial tensions in the United States. Amo leads the daily virtual prayers at noon, and she finds that this has allowed her to have more touch points with the congregation. “The daily prayers have created a new community,” said Amo.

Amo has found spiritual sustenance during this time through virtual groups that practice yoga, meditation and prayer. A virtual group for Women of Color has also provided her with a great deal of support. Because of Zoom, she is now able to join groups from around the world, and this has been a gift. In the past, it has sometimes been difficult to

connect with her family due to conflicting schedules and differing time zones. The COVID-19 situation has made it easier for her family to connect via Zoom. She and her siblings have a weekly meeting with their parents, and set aside time to share more of their stories. For Amo, these times of virtual connection have been rejuvenating.

### **An Interview with Interim Associate Minister Katherine Schofield, July 20, 2020**

*The Reverend Katherine Schofield has been Old South's Interim Associate Minister since January 2019. Katherine's ministry focuses on Christian formation, small groups, and Congregational Care & Support. In this role, she works closely with the Congregational Care & Support Committee.*

Members of the Old South's Congregational Care & Support Committee were quick to respond to the emerging needs of the congregation when it became clear how serious the pandemic was going to be. As soon as Old South stopped offering in-person worship services, members of the committee went to work calling members of the community who are 75 or older to check in about their physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Each member over the age of 75 was paired with a volunteer to deliver groceries, medications, and other necessities. Katherine was pleased and moved to have over a dozen members volunteer to be paired with a more senior member of Old South. The daily prayers offered online via Facebook were also an initiative of the Congregational Care & Support Committee. Following these efforts, members of the Congregational Care & Support Committee and the Membership Committee initiated an all-church calling campaign. Volunteers called all members and friends of Old South to see if anyone needed any type of assistance. In phase two of Massachusetts re-opening, volunteers began offering our more vulnerable members rides to medical appointments.

Katherine has been inspired and heartened by the number of volunteers who stepped forward to take part in this tender ministry of caring for one another. As she and other members of the Care & Support Committee worked on connecting senior citizens with volunteers, she was touched to note that many were already receiving support from Old South members in their neighborhoods. Members also participated in making and distributing masks and care packages for those that needed them. "I am so impressed by the many acts of kindness that we can celebrate during our anniversary year," Katherine said. "Old South is so blessed to have a support team that was already in-place. I am so grateful to be part of a church where care and support is so deeply ingrained in our community."

### **An Interview with Old South's Senior Deacons, August 3, 2020**

*Susan Navia and Rubén Bonilla Santiago served as Co-Senior Deacons from 2020-2021.*

Co-Senior Deacons Susan Navia and Rubén Bonilla-Santiago were only a few weeks into their terms as Co-Senior Deacons when they faced an unexpected challenge. Just as they were recruiting hospitality volunteers for the spring of 2020, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health started reporting the first cases of COVID-19 in the state. Susan and Rubén sent out a survey to Old South's Deacons and hospitality volunteers to find out if the emergence of this disease would alter their plans for volunteering for hospitality tasks. Fifty-percent of the respondents indicated that they would not volunteer, and this was one of the many considerations that led the COVID-19 Blue Ribbon Task Force to close Old South's doors.

This difficult decision did not keep Susan and Rubén from finding a way to continue to provide hospitality during these unusual days. Deacons have participated in our online worship to lead the congregation in welcoming new members and newly baptized infants into the life of Old South. The Board of Ministers and Deacons has been able to hold gatherings via Zoom to vote in new members. Susan noted that these virtual votes have had 100% participation from the Deacons. She has been moved that so many people still want to join Old South even when the physical doors are closed, and believes that this is a testament to the power of our community.

Susan and Rubén look forward to resuming virtual Deacons meetings in the fall. They hope to find additional ways to support the Old South ministers and staff as they continue to do the challenging work of being an online church with a global reach. Rubén said, "It is awesome to see so many people join our streaming services from the world map that is displayed at the opening of worship. This opens up avenues for Old South to reach people around the World."

### **An Interview with the Reverend David Story, Wedding Outreach Minister, September 18, 2020**

*The Reverend David Story serves as Old South's Wedding Outreach Minister.*

The COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped Old South's wedding ministry. Most notably, the pandemic brought a dramatic reduction in weddings that were hosted at our beloved church. David says that there were roughly

twenty-three weddings planned for this year, and many of these were canceled or postponed once COVID-19 arrived in Boston. David was grateful to be able to perform his first “COVID-19” wedding on September 5th, and a second one on September 18th.

While the wedding ceremonies themselves have not changed, the planning and logistics are considerably different. Due to statewide restrictions on public gatherings, there can be no more than twenty-five people in attendance at the wedding. A couple who married at the church recently had originally invited 125 guests to their wedding; this was scaled back to fourteen. There is no longer a procession, and the guests have to be seated carefully so that they are not too close to one another. While the couple can still have musicians, there cannot be any singing. All guests have to wear masks, and David said that seeing a “masked wedding” has been one of the strangest aspects of this experience.

David misses the relationships that he is able to build when he meets with a couple in-person. He usually has three or four meetings with the couple, and often invites them to dinner at his home. Now, he meets with couples over Zoom, and he had not seen one of the couples in-person until their wedding day.

Despite all these changes, David says that the couples have been very adaptable, and that these events still feel very much like a wedding. “The joy of doing something normal has given me renewed energy,” said David. He was touched when the first couple he married sent him a thank you note signed “Forever your Pandemic Couple.” David said, “Old South is still ministering to the community; helping to be a launching pad for couples has been wonderful.”

### **An Interview with Old South Seminarian Thomas Mitchell, April 2021**

*Thomas Mitchell is a second-year student at Harvard Divinity School and has been doing his field education at Old South since the fall of 2020. Thomas is focusing his studies on the intersection of politics and religion. At Old South, Thomas helps out with the Thursday night Jazz Coffee House, serves on the Climate Crisis Task Force, and helps lead worship at the 10 a.m. virtual service.*

Thomas Mitchell is Old South’s first seminarian to serve in a virtual capacity, but this has not prevented his ministry from being impressive. One of Thomas’s chief responsibilities has been to help out with the Thursday night Jazz Coffee House, and to host the coffee hour afterwards. During Lent, Thomas led a six-week conversation series that allowed members to explore their faith through discussions on timeless questions such as “Does evil exist?” and “What is new life?” A personal point of pride for Thomas is that thanks to a conversation with Amo Ngoepe, the congregation now says the Lord’s Prayer a bit differently. He said to Amo, “You know, I actually can’t see the Lord’s Prayer as a masculine prayer, that is not how I was raised. It’s actually harder for me to even attempt to just say “Our Father” and then not say “Our Mother.” So Amo and Thomas began experimenting with different ways of reciting the Lord’s Prayer during worship, and they have not used traditional masculine pronouns since mid-January. “I think it is a really healthy and really beautiful transition into a new way of interacting with God,” said Thomas.

Thomas and his classmates were disappointed when they learned last summer that Harvard would not permit them to serve in their field placements in the usual in-person capacity. For Thomas, one of his biggest regrets has been missing out on the powerful experience of taking part in the clergy procession at the beginning and closing of Sunday services. Thomas also noted that the absence of a commute to the church impacted the planning that went into his work week. His travel time to and from church or to various Old South events were meant to count towards his hours of fieldwork, so this has freed up time that has to be filled in some other capacity. But ultimately, the biggest challenge was “trying to get a pulse of the congregation as a community and the sense of who folks are, where they fit into places, and what things they want to receive,” Thomas said.

Thomas is grateful for the conversations that have sustained him during this very challenging year. As part of his field education at Harvard, Thomas attends a weekly class that compliments his field work at Old South. The class is composed of just six students, so this has been a rich opportunity to hear about his classmates’ experiences during this unique year. Thomas is the only one in the group who is working in a church setting, so these weekly conversations have given him the space to articulate why traditions such as Communion are important to him. He has also cherished the small group conversations that he gets to have with Old South members during the Thursday night social hour that follows the Jazz service. For Thomas, this has given him the space to find out what matters to our members in their daily lives, and this has helped inform his ministry. As he looks back on this year, Thomas is grateful for the staff and the congregation’s readiness to embrace the experience of having a virtual intern. “I would just like to thank the congregation for being able to roll with it,” said Thomas.

## **An Interview with the Reverend Nancy Taylor, Senior Minister, September 11, 2021**

*The Reverend Nancy Taylor has been Old South's Senior Minister since 2005.*

*How has ministry changed since March 2020?* Everything has changed...a church is such a relational vs. transactional entity. The building went from being a hive to being a tomb; from a gathering place to a recording studio and set.

While the building isn't the church, it is a vital platform and springboard for our ministries. Even so, we have learned how to minister without the building. Digital technologies were a life saver, allowing us to be scattered yet gathered, distanced yet assembled.

Another change: people's sense of security has been shaken, challenged, taken away. Moreover, we see each other as potential vectors.

*What did a week/day in ministry look like during the heart of the pandemic?* Zoom meetings, production schedule, an empty church, spending a lot of time alone. For the first months of the pandemic almost no other staff came into the building. Our sextons came and cleaned every nook and cranny, every closet. They have repainted rooms, waxed floors, dusted and polished. Our brand new Director of Operations came to work. John Braught started with us during the pandemic. He had an empty building to oversee. And, living within walking distance of the church, I came and worked in my office every day. I preferred it over working from home, as a change of scenery and with all my books at hand.

At times I felt as if I had been transported to a strange land. It is eerie. Quiet. Alien. I don't speak the language of production schedule, of pre-recording worship, of the digital technologies with which our younger members of staff are so familiar. I feel old. I am learning this language but I don't really like it.

*What have been some of the hardest moments during this season?* Watching those who have lost loved ones. The pandemic makes grief harder and more complicated ... making the process of grieving even more lonely than it already is. Loved ones die alone, in hospitals, with their next of kin not being able to visit. Funerals, if held at all, have been virtual.

We are all trying to live in the moment. We are trying to listen to Jesus: not to be anxious about tomorrow ... but the thing about tomorrow is, it keeps coming and with each new tomorrow there are more deaths, more sorrow.

*What gives you hope?* The stories of our forebears; their trust in God through thick and thin. We are reading these ancient stories—the stories of exile, wandering, of flood and fire, pestilence, pandemic and catastrophe – more earnestly.

Science gives me hope. The vaccines were developed in record time. So many Old Southerners are scientists, doctors, and nurses. They are toiling away using evidence and technologies.

The friends and members of Old South, my colleagues on staff, these give me hope. Everyone is carrying on, caring, doing, making change, managing, gritting their teeth and bearing up, soldiering on, being inventive. This is a season of adapt or die. All we do is pivot, adjust, reinvent. It can be exhausting, but also exciting to see what new and beautiful things can come from dust and ashes.

*It has been a season of catastrophes...*Yes, one upon another. We are earnestly engaged in a season of national reckoning over race. We are being pummeled and walloped by the effects of a warming planet: hurricane, flooding, wildfires and drought. These in turn are forcing human migrations, affecting agriculture, ruining economies. On top of it all, we are in the throes of a global pandemic: it is invisible, insidious, snaking its way from person to person. It feels unrelenting, overwhelming. Yet, in the midst of it there are moments of brightness, humor, companionship, science, medicine ... and we carry on. Our efforts to learn about racism, our climate justice work ... these we are carrying on.

*Tell me about our role as a Teaching Church in the midst of a pandemic.* We kept teaching. Our seminarian and our pastoral resident ministered remotely but, I would argue, no less effectively. Our mentoring, like everything else, was carried on via Zoom meetings. So, while the pandemic scattered us, isolated us and prevented us from in-person gathering, our teaching ministries continued apace and our candidates for ordination – both members in discernment and staff – learned a whole lot about ministry in a time of crisis.

*And, reopening?*

Well, we had hoped, thought, expected we would fling open the doors after Labor Day and pull out all the stops: brass and drum, thundering organ and soaring descant. But, with the onslaught of the Delta virus our opening will be muted. We are nowhere near celebrating victory over the virus. Young children do not yet have the opportunity to be vaccinated. We will be masked and socially isolated. No communion. No coffee hour. No refreshments. Our children and youth will gather off-site, out of doors, in locations scouted by our Director of Children and Family Ministries. Our opening will be subdued. It looks as if the virus will be with us, in waves that ebb and flow, for some years to come. And so, we adapt again. We pivot and adjust. As the news and the numbers indicate, we correct and fine-tune. We are getting used to it.

However, when the dust finally settles and we are free to worship unencumbered by the various COVID protocols, I don't know who will be left. During the pandemic a number of our families with young children sold their Boston residences and moved to wide open spaces (Maine, western Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire). Many of our young adults, previously in Boston for undergraduate or graduate work, relocated back to their parent's homes when school went virtual. Too many of our elders experienced a decline in mental and physical health as a result of being isolated and unable to move around. I am told that many of our young children don't remember church. Finally, attending church is a habit and now a great many Old Southerners are out of the habit. Will they choose to resume packing children into cars to drive into the city, hunt for parking and wend their way to worship? Parking, weather, traffic, getting dressed up ... there are a lot of reasons not to resume the habit of worship. We shall see. Time will tell.

In this report I want to say a personal word of thanks to our Church Historian, Kate Silfen, for taking so much trouble over reporting on this pandemic. When COVID-19 first appeared, I looked back into the church archives to see how our forebears navigated the 1918 pandemic. Crickets. I can barely find a mention of it. And so I turned to Kate to ask if she would keep track, make a record of, and report on how Old South Church met and navigated this silent, invisible, insinuating menace. This she has done and then some!

Let this record stand as a witness to one Christian community's resistance, ingenuity, and faithfulness in the presence of a lurking adversary. Let the record state that we stood the ground of our faith. We carried on with our ministries. We did not flag in zeal. Our God did not abandon us in our time of trial and, we, for our part, did not abandon either God or the high purpose to which we are called.

## **Keeping the Financial House in Order**

### **An Interview with Bill Bukleley, Treasurer, April 4, 2020**

*Bill Bukleley serves as Old South's Treasurer. He and his family are long-time members of the Church.*

Bill said that it became clear to Old South's leadership that major changes were coming by mid-March. At a virtual Board of Trustees meeting on March 17th, the Trustees decided to take a close look at the potential impact that the Church's closing would have on the operating budget. At a follow-up Treasurer's meeting on March 23rd, the group estimated that building use and rental currently covers approximately 12% of the Church's yearly operating costs. In order to mitigate some of this loss, groups that have already provided a deposit for their event will be able to use these funds to cover the cost of holding the event at a later date. Old South Church is not operating in-person, but the Preschool teachers are now providing services and activities online, so for the moment parents will not be reimbursed for the tuition fees that they have already paid. This measure will allow Old South to retain the teachers. Helen McCrady reported that most Old South Church members met their pledges during the recession in 2008, so Bill does not anticipate this being an issue for the church during this challenging economic period.

Old South's biggest financial losses will come from not being open for Easter and Marathon Sunday. Between the offerings from these two services, Old South raises about \$10,000. Otherwise, weekly services bring offerings of about \$1,000 a week. Bill noted that the church has a "rainy day fund" of \$420,000, and he anticipates that this will allow the church to maintain staff. Old South is also eligible for the Paycheck Protection Plan that is now being offered by the government, and the church has applied for this. If the Paycheck Protection Plan comes through, this would reduce the \$200,000 loss that the Board of Trustees anticipates from the church's temporary closure. Bill wrapped up the interview by saying: "The church is very fortunate to have a strong financial foundation and an emergency cushion designed to carry us through this unexpected situation."



## **An Interview with Helen McCrady, Senior Church Administrator, November 17, 2020**

*Helen McCrady has been Old South's Senior Church Administrator since 1999. She is also an active member of Old South Church.*

Senior Church Administrator Helen McCrady saw her job change dramatically when the building closed to the public last March. Her work shifted from managing the building and coordinating events to keeping a closer watch on the church's finances. Helen said, "Tracking income has become more intense because we now have more ways of collecting donations." There is a donate button available during our streaming services, traditional online giving, and an option to donate from Old South's Facebook page. Helen carefully tracks these donations in order to acknowledge the givers and to make projections about Old South's income. Helen was glad to note that congregational giving has remained strong throughout the course of the pandemic.

Helen said that it was initially difficult to see so many events get canceled in light of the pandemic, but she came to see it as a great exercise in acceptance. She said, "This was a real experience in realizing that you have to let go of everything you have planned, and you don't know for how long." The Reverend Nancy Taylor regularly emails the staff the Serenity Prayer to help them cope with this long period of uncertainty. For Helen, the biggest challenge has been worrying about the health and stability of the congregation.

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, Helen has felt blessed in many ways. With our services now virtual, Helen has enjoyed experiencing Old South more like a member and less like a church administrator. For the first time, she has been able to attend the Thursday evening Jazz services because they are online. Participating in Old South's virtual "Blessing of the Animals" was particularly joyful for her. Helen said, "Our ministerial and programming staff has been so inspiring. Watching them pick up our congregation and make it virtual and literally being there for everyone has been an example of how God works through people."

## **Outreach During a Pandemic**

### **An Interview with Marie Hurd, Chair of the Christian Service & Outreach Committee, April 8, 2020**

*Marie Hurd is Chair of Old South's Christian Service & Outreach Committee.*

The Christian Service & Outreach Committee has been hard at work providing a robust and generous response to the pandemic. Marie described the following decisions and initiatives on the part of Christian Service & Outreach Committee.

On March 28th, the Christian Service & Outreach Committee held a two-hour virtual retreat. The committee members spent the first half of the retreat checking in with one another and sharing their concerns. During the second half of the retreat, the committee turned to a discussion about ways to respond to the pandemic. The committee has \$100,000 to give to four different grantees. These funds are usually distributed at the end of the year. However, the committee decided to give the grantees the option of collecting their grant money now when they may need it most. The four grantees each serve the homeless or vulnerable in the city of Boston, and they include Common Cathedral, City Mission Society, Bridge Over Troubled Water, and Healthcare Without Walls. The remainder of these funds will support Snowden and the Urban Mission Ministry.

Marie said that the Christian Service & Outreach Committee is also collaborating on a letter that will go out to the Old South community. The letter will outline ways that people can provide support to the most vulnerable communities in the city of Boston.

Sanctuary II Church Update: Old South has helped to sponsor and support an asylum-seeking guest who is now doing well; this individual is now employed and has a place to live. Another guest is not doing quite as well, and the committee has voted to contribute some funds to support the Sanctuary Cluster.

The Christian Service & Outreach Committee also has a \$5,000 emergency grant fund. The committee voted to give this money to the Reverend Nancy Taylor to spend at the discretion of the staff.

## **An Interview with Ralph Watson, Snowden School Volunteer Coordinator, April 17, 2020**

*Ralph Watson coordinates the volunteers for Old South's Partnership with the Snowden International School. He currently serves as a Member-at-Large on Council.*

Ralph began our conversation by providing some background on the Snowden Partnership. Phase one began last fall when Ralph began recruiting Old South volunteers to serve as a mentor for a Snowden student. Mentors check in with their students once a week over phone, email or text message. They have also scheduled monthly in-person meetings. In phase two, the focus has been on setting up one-on-one tutoring for the Snowden students who may need it.

The beginning of the coronavirus pandemic may have put a temporary halt to the in-person meetings between students, mentors, and tutors, but the work continues virtually. The tutors are offering writing tutoring over email by looking over student papers and emailing them feedback and suggestions. Old South currently has ten tutors who are assisting students who are struggling with distance learning. Mentors continue to communicate with their students via text, phone, and e-mail. They have also been touching base with the families of the students they are mentoring, and have provided grocery gift cards for those in need. Ralph is now recruiting additional volunteers to check in with the students on a weekly basis.

Ralph has taken on an additional, tender ministry for the community during these difficult days: baking treats and sending them to Old South members who live alone. Ralph credits Old South with doing an amazing job of keeping worship services and opportunities going at this time, but "I miss the church so much, so I am baking for our members. I am finding it to be a helpful way to spend the time. Making others feel good is getting me through this."

## **A National Reckoning on Racism During a Pandemic**

The United States went through a national reckoning on racism in the midst of the lengthy COVID-19 pandemic. This reckoning was spurred by the violent death of 46-year-old George Floyd, a Black man who had been handcuffed and pinned to the ground by the knee of police officer Derek Chauvin on May 25, 2020 in Minneapolis. This brutal scene was captured on a video taken by a bystander. George Floyd's death followed earlier police violence that killed Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri in 2014, Freddie Gray in Baltimore in 2015 and Breonna Taylor in 2020. The day after the killing, large protests erupted in Minneapolis. Soon, there were protests across the nation. (*The New York Times*, 2021). The pandemic heightened our community's awareness of racial inequality in this country. The CDC reported that COVID-19 has unequally affected many racial and ethnic groups, putting them at greater risk of dying from the disease (CDC, 2021).

In the midst of coping with the challenges of the pandemic, the Old South leaders led the church through a robust response to this racial reckoning. All church members and friends were invited to read Ibram Kendi's *How to be An Anti-Racist* and participate in group discussions of this important work. Church Council leaders requested that all standing committee chairs consider how to do anti-racism work in the church. The G(R)ACE Speaks Committee offered a series of anti-racism workshops to leaders and members of Old South.

The Reverend Nancy Taylor requested that I interview leaders of the Anti-Racism workshops as part of the COVID-19 documentation I am providing. I was pleased to be able to interview both Tracey Keene and Deborah Washington as part of this project.

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## **An Interview with Tracy Keene, Chair of the G(R)ACE Speaks Committee, December 11, 2020**

*Tracy Keene is Chair of the Old South Church's G(R)ACE Speaks Committee. Approved by the congregation at the 348<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, the mission of the G(R)ACE Speaks Committee is to foster diversity awareness throughout the church with the goal of protecting the dignity of every human person. In March of 2020, the committee launched an anti-racism workshop. This workshop was adapted for a four-week online workshop offered to leaders of the congregation in October of 2020. Fifty board members and leaders of committees attended the workshop series.*

Deborah Washington first planned and designed the workshop that the committee offered to the congregation in March of 2020. After the violent death of George Floyd over the summer, the G(R)ACE Speaks Committee saw a crucial need to train church leaders to begin the work of anti-racism. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, all church gatherings and meetings have been held online. Because of this, the committee had to meet the considerable challenge of moving in-person content into an online environment. Tracy said that the process of adapting the workshop for a virtual setting took about six weeks. One of the key challenges, said Tracy, was making the online material engaging and to allow for the same profound and holy dialogue that participants would have had in-person. Tracy was pleased to report that twenty-six of the attendees responded to the post-workshop surveys, and many of the respondents felt that the online format worked well. Tracy said that the respondents indicated that “they have taken what they’ve learned and experienced to heart, both in their personal reckoning with racism and as one of our mandates from Council to bring these conversations to their own committees.” The G(R)ACE Speaks Committee looks forward to following up on this workshop by opening it up to the wider Old South community during Black History Month. Their hope is to have some of the fifty attendees of the October workshop help facilitate the February workshops and any that might follow after that.

“I now know of fifty people who can offer Old South’s extravagant welcome to people of color,” said Tracy. The mission of G(R)ACE Speaks is to continue to help our community “confront race and racism when they see it, not only in their personal lives, but in their life as Christians. The work is only just beginning,” Tracy said. “The Reverend Nancy Taylor has called racism America’s original sin, and this is a national reckoning that will not go away overnight.”

### **An Interview with Deborah Washington, January 7, 2021**

*Deborah Washington is a member of Old South’s G(R)ACE Speaks Committee and recently served as the church’s first Black Moderator. She played a key role in designing and facilitating the anti-racism workshop series that Old South leaders attended in October of 2020.*

The idea for the anti-racism workshop series grew out of conversations between members of G(R)ACE Speaks. Members of the committee shared stories about their experiences, and wanted to create a safe learning space where members could not only hear these stories but work to change what these stories represent. The committee members decided to develop a curriculum that would allow members to do that. Deb outlined a curriculum by using materials she has used in her own professional presentations over the years and found ideas for interactive exercises on the Internet. She shared her outline to G(R)ACE Speaks members and they added their own ideas for material to include. “It was a great group effort,” Deb said.

There were many things that stood out for Deb throughout the workshops. One key thing that Deb will remember is that she saw participants have many “aha!” moments. She was moved by the lack of defensiveness when it came to people being able to say “I never thought of it like that before,” or “I need to change that.”

Members of the G(R)ACE Speaks Committee would like to develop a second part to this curriculum. “From my perspective,” Deb said, “I would like to see us go after the idea of stereotypes as a fiction of a created man that doesn’t exist in reality.” Deb hopes to create a space where workshop attendees can learn to identify and distinguish this fiction from reality. Ultimately, the members of the G(R)ACE Speaks Committee would like to see the workshop attendees take a leadership role in promoting and teaching future workshops. “Leadership is key,” said Deb.

### **Member Stories: Everyday Life During a Pandemic**

#### **An Interview with Charlotte Simpson, April 14, 2020**

*Charlotte Simpson is a longtime member of the Old South Church, where she has been active on the Christian Service & Outreach Committee, GBIO, and the Monday night Theological Book Group.*

Charlotte said that she has been feeling fine during the pandemic. While Charlotte is grateful to be doing well, there are several things that she misses in her day-to-day life. Before the pandemic started, she regularly saw friends in-person, went to the MFA, the gym, and out to movies, but now misses all these things. Because it is harder to get groceries, she is not enjoying the fresh fruit and vegetables that are normally a regular part of her diet. A regular walker, Charlotte does not find it safe to walk on the Esplanade because it has become too crowded.

She has been keeping active by taking walks along the Commonwealth Mall, practicing Pilates, and keeping up with her physical therapy. With a background in mathematics, Charlotte has enjoyed keeping track of the daily statistics on the prevalence of COVID-19. She keeps her mind active by reading, taking part in the Monday night Theological Book Group at Old South, and doing crossword puzzles. Charlotte has appreciated the online services that Old South has been offering, and is grateful for the assistance of Old South member Marcia Gregg, who has been helping her out with groceries. Charlotte checks in regularly with members of Old South who may need extra assistance at this time. During this crisis, Charlotte is glad to be able to keep in contact with family and friends through Zoom and by phone. It is worth noting that Charlotte has lifted the spirits of the Old South community by sending out daily humorous stories to our email list; a ministry enjoyed by all!

### **An Interview with Rob Gabler, April 22, 2020**

*Rob Gabler serves as Old South's Clerk. He is also part of the Monday night Theological Book Group.*

Rob Gabler is grateful to be in a strong position to handle the challenges of this pandemic. As an attorney with an independent law practice, Rob is no stranger to working from home on a regular basis. He enjoys the company of his dog, Nitro, and they walk a couple of miles a day. Rob says that much of the adjustment is psychological as he now thinks about how he would adapt if he did become ill. He has a back-up plan and the support of his friends if this does happen. Rob says: "I am prepared to do my part to do what it takes to beat this thing. Beyond that, there is only so much I can do, and knowing this provides me with a measure of comfort."

He credits the support of the Old South community for keeping his spirits up and making him feel that he has a safety net of support. He keeps up with several friends from the Church, and finds that attending the Theological Book Group led by Theologian-in-Residence Don Wells is one of the key ways he stays connected. Rob said, "It is important for me to know that Old South is even bigger than our beautiful building. And it takes a crisis to remind us that the simple things are important."

### **An Interview with Larry Mynatt, April 27, 2020**

*Larry Mynatt is a member of the Choir at Old South, and a regular at the Monday night Theological Book Group.*

Larry Mynatt has had first-hand experience with COVID-19. He and his husband Paul became ill with the virus at the end of March. Larry suspects that they were exposed to the virus when they were shopping for food and supplies just before Governor Baker closed all non-essential businesses. His symptoms included an achy back, a low-grade fever, and a severe cough. These symptoms lasted until Easter Sunday, which is when his fever finally went down. At one point, Paul was so concerned about Larry that he stayed up with him for three nights to make sure that his breathing was regular. "If anything," Larry said, "this brought Paul and me even closer."

COVID-19 has also impacted his work and financial life. Larry is a counselor who specializes in biofeedback, and this is work that needs to be done in-person with his clients. "Like a lot of people, we have been creative to make ends meet," Larry said. He and Paul are working on subletting a studio apartment that they own in Central Square. In the meantime, Paul and Larry both tested negative for COVID, and consequently, he is now able to start seeing clients again.

Larry is grateful for everything that the Old South ministerial staff has done to provide the congregation with spiritual support during this time. As a choir member, he has loved the Monday afternoon "Worship Matters" series offered by Music Minister Mitchell Crawford. For Larry, attending the Thursday night virtual Jazz Coffee House has been a special treat since choir practice conflicts with the in-person Thursday night Jazz service.

### **An Interview with Gracie and Mirabelle Berman Reinhardt, May 2, 2020**

*Gracie and Mirabelle Berman Reinhardt are both active members of Old South Church's Youth Group. They attend the Boston Latin School.*

The pandemic has brought dramatic changes to Gracie's and Mirabelle's daily lives. While they have been homeschooling, there has not been much structure to it, and they miss the interaction with their friends. As students at Boston Latin, they are used to "swarms of kids." On the more positive side, both enjoy the reduced stress, the slower pace of life, and the additional sleep that they are now able to get. Gracie and Mirabelle both feel that the

Youth Group has provided them with some much-needed sense of normalcy during these challenging days. The weekly Zoom meetings give them a space to check-in with friends, and they are enjoying experimenting with virtual online games as a group. Their favorite game is Code Names. "It's been helpful to have Old South here," said Gracie.

### **An Interview with Pamela Roberts, May 12, 2020**

*Pam Roberts and her husband Scott McInturff are long-time members of the Old South Church. Their three children have also been active members of the Old South community. Pam has served in many roles at Old South, and is currently a Member-at-Large on Council.*

Pam expressed gratitude that she and her family are holding up well during the pandemic. She is enjoying spending this time at home with Scott, Miranda, and Zane. She and Scott stay busy with working, reading and walking 5-6 miles each day. Pam and Scott have been trading off going to the grocery store, and take advantage of the early morning hours reserved for adults in a more vulnerable age group. Pam also runs a weekly Women's Group for Old South Church members. While there used to be a pre-planned topic for these meetings, she is now letting this time be an informal space for everyone to check-in with one another. A few members of the group live alone, and they appreciate this time to connect with the Old South community.

While Pam feels fortunate to have her family, this time period has not been without its challenges. "I had a few panic attacks during the first few weeks of the pandemic," Pam said. As an artist, Pam misses going to her art classes, and as a sports fan, she mourns not being able to go to baseball games. She and Scott worry about his 90-year old father, who lives in South Carolina. They also have friends and additional family members living in states that are beginning to loosen their restrictions, and this is a source of constant concern for them both.

While Pam misses coming to Old South in-person, she appreciates everything the church has done to continue its ministry, and says, "I do love it that I can enjoy streaming services in my pajamas."

### **An Interview with Bradford Swing, June 29, 2020**

*Brad Swing is a member of Old South's COVID-19 Blue Ribbon Task Force. He serves as the Director of Energy, Policy, and Programs for the City of Boston.*

The arrival of COVID-19 in Boston has had a profound impact on Brad's professional and personal life. As an employee in the Mayor's office, Brad has been "blown away by what a huge crisis management project this is. Very few people could appreciate how much work and redirection was necessary to keep the city moving." Although Brad's energy office has transitioned well to remote work, Brad saw many of his colleagues work seven days a week to keep up with the special challenges posed by the pandemic. By the date of this interview, city employees have delivered two million meals to Boston residents. The Mayor's office oversaw the conversion of the Boston Convention Center into a hospital to handle the overflow of COVID-19 cases in the city. Mayor's office meetings throughout April were increasingly stressful, due to the unexpectedly stubborn plateau of cases that persisted that month. "No one could have anticipated this," said Brad. "I am extremely humbled and honored to work with people who have been doing their level best to keep this city moving."

The coronavirus has, until recently, posed especially complicated challenges for Brad's daily life outside of work. Brad had a kidney transplant a few years ago, and soon afterwards developed a virus due to his compromised immune system. Brad has since recovered, but his doctors did not know if he would be especially vulnerable to COVID-19. Because COVID can be transmitted by non-symptomatic carriers, Brad's doctors advised that he and his husband, Tim Harbold, practice social distancing within their own apartment. However, recently Brad's doctor told him that the death rate from COVID-19 among transplant patients who do not have any other comorbidities has not been any higher than patients who have not had a transplant. Brad is glad to share that he is now able to give Tim a hug and be in the same room with him; they are considered a "pod." Brad said, "I am so glad not to live in mortal fear, literally."

Brad has been honored to be a member of the COVID-19 Task Force, which he says has been "led beautifully by the beautiful Nancy Taylor." He has been blown away by the knowledge of the medical professionals on the Task Force, and has loved witnessing the spirit that Senior Church Administrator Helen McCrady has brought to her work. Brad feels confident that the ministerial staff would have made the right choices on their own, but the Task Force has helped ratify the decisions made by the church's stellar leadership.

### **An Interview with Candice Belanoff, July 1, 2020**

*Candice Belanoff has been an Old South Church member for eight years, and is a regular at the Monday night Theological Book Group led by the Reverend Don Wells. She is a professor at Boston University's School of Public Health.*

Candice's life quickly changed personally and professionally when cases of COVID-19 began to appear in the United States. Her sister is a nurse on Long Island, and she became infected with COVID-19 early in the pandemic. Thankfully, her sister made a full recovery after a month. As a professor at Boston University, Candice had to quickly adapt to teaching online. While this was stressful, it also felt like a new adventure. "It really went OK," said Candice. "One of the things that made it OK was slowing down and taking the time to check-in with my students. They have been willing to be real about what is happening and not pretending."

As a professor of public health, Candice is interested in how social inequality and systematic racism can impact the health of a community. Candice says that health professionals have already noted that COVID-19 has a greater impact on populations that are already dealing with inequality. "Generally, the public health field is trying to understand how and why this happened, and is using COVID-19 as a model to understand how disadvantaged communities deal with disease."

Old South's Theological Book Group has helped keep Candice grounded during the pandemic. While she misses seeing Old South friends in-person, Candice says she has been proud of Old South's measured, careful response to the pandemic, and has been impressed by the creativity of the online services. "I am prouder than ever to be part of a congregation that is so socially conscious and puts the greater social good ahead of everything else."

### **An Interview with Ellen Simmons, December 31, 2020**

*Ellen Simmons and her husband Matt joined the Old South Church in April of 2020. She is the Director of the Ronald McDonald House and the mother of Isabella, who celebrated her first birthday in December.*

The pandemic began at a unique time in Ellen's life. She had just had her first child, Isabella, in December and was returning to work after her maternity leave. As soon as Ellen returned to her work as Director of the Ronald McDonald House on Monday, March 16, she was directed to work from home due to the arrival of COVID-19 in Massachusetts. During these first few months, Ellen was grateful to be able to balance motherhood and work by sharing responsibilities with her husband, who was also working at home. This arrangement worked well for them until Isabella became more mobile. In order to get help with childcare, Ellen, Matt, and Isabella moved in part-time with Ellen's parents during the work week. "I count my blessings; we are so fortunate to have this support," said Ellen. Despite this support, parenting during a pandemic has not been without its considerable challenges. Ellen said, "As a new mom, you are always questioning your decisions, and the pandemic has brought a whole new set of challenges within my first year of motherhood." Ellen noted that one of the hardest aspects of this pandemic is that Isabella's other grandparents have not yet met their grandchild.

Ellen and Matt are moved by the outpouring of support they have received from the Old South community. The Congregational Care & Support Committee sent Isabella a onesie shortly after her birth, and they were so grateful for the cards they received from members of the congregation after their virtual joining ceremony. The Reverend Nancy Taylor's Christmas Eve sermon featured video clips of babies who are part of Old South, and Ellen was delighted that Isabella was in a clip. Ellen said, "this made us feel so connected to the Old South community." Ellen also said that the virtual services have allowed them to participate in a way that they might not have otherwise had a chance to while caring for a newborn infant. "The virtual service has allowed us to participate in a way that makes sense for our family right now," Ellen said. We have this wonderful community even if we haven't been there in-person."

### **An Interview with Mercedes Ridao, February 2021**

*Mercedes Ridao has been an active member of the Old South Church Community for many years. Her three grown-up children attended Old South's Church School and Youth Group. Mercedes is currently a Deacon and a member of the G(R)ACE Speaks Committee.*

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed special challenges for Mercedes, who has three grown-up children living in different parts of the country. Two of her children, Carla and Daniel, live in San Diego, which initially had one of the



highest number of COVID-19 cases in the country. This was and has been intense and frightening. Mercedes was set to visit Carla and Daniel last April, but she had to cancel the trip due to the pandemic. Carla was due to get married last August, and this has been delayed to August of 2021.

Despite these significant setbacks, Mercedes has experienced some unexpected silver linings of the pandemic. “Zoom took over our lives,” said Mercedes. She believes that this technology brought them closer than simply texting, e-mailing, or talking on the phone would have. “Suddenly I could see them and get to be part of their everyday lives. It was almost like visiting each other; It was almost like we were in each other’s spaces, sharing things like cooking and music.” Zoom also allowed Mercedes to be virtually present for her daughter Lauren’s graduate thesis defense last April. She was also able to throw a virtual baby shower for Lauren, who gave birth to her first child, Theodore, in February. She looks forward to throwing a virtual wedding shower for Carla before her wedding in August.

Mercedes was grateful to be able to drive to Chicago to visit Lauren last summer. While they could not enjoy seeing the city, they were able to enjoy the quiet time they had together at Lauren’s home. “We focused inward,” said Mercedes. She had three weeks to share stories with Lauren about her own pregnancy and experiences with early motherhood. Mercedes noted, “Family life goes on; it just goes on differently. Parenting is about the little things, and I got to continue to do that.”

Mercedes’ connection with Old South has sustained her during these long months. She feels that the Zoom meetings have allowed her to get to know people in a way that she would not have had the chance to in Old South’s busy, physical space. As a member of G(R)ACE Speaks, she has been inspired by the anti-racism workshops that the committee has led for members and leaders of the congregation. She was moved by how open the workshop attendees were, and how ready they were to admit to their own limitations when it came to understanding racial issues. “This showed how much trust everyone has in our community,” said Mercedes.

Mercedes has been moved by the thoughtful, beautiful virtual services that Old South’s ministers have provided over the past year. She appreciates how the ministers incorporate images of our building and sanctuary. Mercedes said, “I thank God for these technologies, and as a church, we are going to come out of this much stronger.”

### **An Interview with David Becker, March 18, 2021**

*David Becker is a nurse practitioner and a term instructor at the MGH Institute of Health Professions. He and his spouse Rock Ripple and daughter Amelia have been active members of the Old South Church for 17 years. David has served on the Board of Ministers & Deacons, the Membership Committee, and the Members-in Discernment Committee. He is currently the chair of the Leadership Committee, and was also a member of Old South’s COVID-19 Blue Ribbon Task Force.*

David Becker’s work as a nurse educator rapidly changed when the first cases of COVID-19 appeared in Boston last spring. In the early days of the pandemic, he was not able to teach in-person classes, and had to move his instruction to Zoom. “Trying to teach clinical procedures over Zoom was very challenging at first; we used a lot of videos and simulations.” David said. Students were asked to demonstrate physical examinations on one practice patient in their homes and submit videos of themselves performing these procedures. For procedures that had to be done in-person, small groups of students would gather with instructors at the MGH Institute of Health Professions. Students’ clinical placements were temporarily suspended during the first few weeks of the pandemic. David also moved his office hours to Zoom, and valued the continued ability to mentor his students despite the pandemic.

David said that this pandemic has not been like anything else he had seen during his years as a nurse, but the closest comparison would be the early years of the AIDS epidemic. “With COVID-19, we were sort of making things up as we went along. In that sense, this has been similar to the first years of the AIDS epidemic in San Francisco where I was working at the time. Unlike COVID, nobody wanted to talk openly about AIDS, and it took longer for the medical community to figure out what was going on.”

David serves on Old South’s COVID-19 Blue Ribbon Task Force. The Task Force consists of Old South’s many physicians, nurses, and city officials, who advised Old South’s ministers on health and safety protocols in the wake of the pandemic. David enjoys this opportunity to come together and collaborate with medical professionals from a variety of institutions. They compared notes on their own institution’s guidelines and researched government recommendations in order to devise a set of recommendations for Old South’s operation during the pandemic. “We were following state guidelines, but we wanted to be even more careful than that,” said David. There was no state-

wide mandate to close houses of worship, but the Task Force decided to take extra precautions by initially closing the church building to the public. David said that closing the building to AA meetings and other related support groups was particularly painful during this long, hard season when people most needed these connections.

David leads a small group at Old South, and their gatherings have been more important than ever during the pandemic. Checking-in with the nine members of his small groups once a week has been an important ritual during this long year. Being a member of the COVID-19 Blue Ribbon Task Force also made him feel more connected, and the church's dedication to following scientific protocols gave him even more faith in the Old South Community. "We obviously lose something by not having in-person services, but the amount of thought that is going into our virtual services is still there and it just keeps getting better. Attendance has been amazing," David said.

### **An Interview with Dr. Daniel Oates, March 26, 2021**

*Old South member Dr. Dan Oates specializes in geriatric medicine and has been in practice for over 16 years. He is currently a geriatrician at PerfectHealth, a practice that provides at-home primary care services for the frail elderly.*

The COVID-19 pandemic brought a set of unique challenges to Dan Oates and his colleagues at PerfectHealth. Because PerfectHealth is a new and small start-up, the two visionary leaders were not sure it would survive the financial strain of the pandemic. From a medical perspective, COVID-19 was unlike anything he had seen before. "Every day was a new day; we didn't know what we were doing." The usual tools that physicians have to fight infectious diseases were not available at the start of the pandemic, and the lack of support from the federal government made their work harder. Dan feels fortunate that he was practicing in Massachusetts, where the support from the local government was better than some parts of the country. Nevertheless, the process of getting their patients vaccinated was a messy one. The vaccines were not available to small practices such as PerfectHealth, and Dan spent a great deal of time helping his patients navigate the state's resources to find vaccine appointments.

Outreach to patients and families has been a strong component of Dan's work since the beginning of the pandemic. Initially, he was not having in-person visits at his practice, so Dan did a lot of telehealth. Dan and his colleagues were making as many as 30-40 calls a day to check-in with their patients. In the process of doing this outreach, Dan was able to witness how caring members of the community were. While most of his patients were homebound, families rose to the occasion to provide support for their loved ones. For patients without families in the area, he saw volunteers from churches and the wider community help those who were homebound. Dan noted: "COVID brought out the worst in humanity, and the best. I saw the best."

During this very challenging year, Dan was strengthened by the support of his spouse and his connection to the Old South Church community. "I give Old South a lot of credit for pivoting so quickly to this high-end professional production of our services," said Dan. "This is a game changer because we have members of Old South from all over the country. This is a new way to get our message of inclusivity and love out to the world."

### **An Interview with Daniel Bergstresser, March 7, 2021**

*Dan Bergstresser and his family have been active members of Old South for many years. Last summer, he and his family moved out to Williamstown, Massachusetts. He responded to some questions over email about what it was like to move during the pandemic.*

*What prompted your move? Was it the pandemic?* The pandemic was definitely the catalyst for this change. All of the folks in our household are pretty energetic, and we have always relied on the public spaces around us —gyms, school ball fields, parks —to burn off that energy. I think that when things started to shut down we realized that we would need a lot of space to burn off our energy, which we didn't have when we were locked into a small-ish condo in Boston. Kim's sister and her family live out in Williamstown so we knew the area reasonably well already.

*What was it like moving during a pandemic?* It went very quickly. We knew Williamstown reasonably well, and found a place we liked reasonably quickly. We sold our place in Boston quickly as well. The move was relatively uneventful, but we were pretty careful and cautious with movers, etc.

Moving to a new place during a pandemic is weird because a lot of the ways that you get to know new neighbors and schoolmates involve face-to-face interaction, which is limited now. I think that this affected folks in our family to greater and lesser degrees, depending on their levels of introversion/extroversion.

*Has your move altered your relationship with Old South? If so, how? Are you accessing our remote offerings? If not, can we help you find a church near where you now live?* I don't know that we know for sure yet. Our interaction with Old South so far is probably not that much different from how it would be if we had stayed, given the pandemic. We watch church services online here, as we did there. I think that when things open up again it will be kind of an open question about how we start to interact with the world out here, which may include attending in-person services out here.

I would suspect that we would continue to engage online and in-person with Old South, especially given that we will regularly be back in Boston for work. I think that we are finding that we may actually prefer being out here in the mountains to how we lived before, even before the pandemic. So it seems unlikely that we would return to Boston full time, at least based on what we think we know now. We will probably continue to have feet in each place.

### **An Interview with Angela Pape, June 2021**

*Angela, her husband Colin, and their three children have been active members of the Old South Church community and moved to New Hampshire in May of 2020. Their family is one of several to relocate in the midst of the pandemic.*

Angela and her family had decided to relocate before the pandemic hit in March 2020. She and Colin wanted to live in a cohousing community in New Hampshire and were also looking to be closer to nature. They moved into their new community on May 15th, but went to New Hampshire earlier than that in order to stay with Angela's parents once the pandemic hit. Moving into her parent's household helped them manage the competing responsibilities of childcare, homeschooling, and work. "There were unrealistic expectations for families trying to juggle work and homeschooling multiple kids in different classes," said Angela.

Moving during a pandemic was challenging on many levels. They had to take extra care with cleaning out the home they were selling due to COVID-19 protocols. Angela and Colin use natural cleaning products, and were concerned that these were not strong enough to eliminate germs. Once they moved, her family was not able to get to know their community due to the pandemic. Angela regrets that the pandemic compelled them to move so quickly. "The normal good-byes and rites of passage could not happen," she said.

Angela and her family have maintained their connection to the Old South community throughout the course of the pandemic. Angela took part in the discussions about Ibram Kendi's book *How to be an Anti-Racist*. She has especially appreciated the worship resources that Kate Nintcheu has been sending out to families. While Angela and Colin plan to find a local church in order to establish connections in their community, they look forward to hearing about what is next for Old South as the community considers services for a post-pandemic life. "This is an interesting time for churches; I think this is a time to reimagine what faith communities will look like," Angela noted.

