

2026 Application for House of Mercy Grant

Name of Ministry

Amazing Grace of Cape Cod Inc.

Name of Congregation

St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Barnstable, MA

Congregation mailing address, telephone and email

3055 Main St, Barnstable, MA 02630

Clergy Contact Information

The Rev. Michael J. Horvath

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Grant Contact Person and Contact Information

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Program Mission Statement and Description

Amazing Grace of Cape Cod's mission is to break the cycle of incarceration for affected children, and their families, by cultivating sustained healthy relationships. We do this by providing camp experiences and year-round activities that nurture a supportive community of peers with a similar family situation and adults who care.

Children whose parents are incarcerated are at risk. Statistically, these children are 3-6 times more likely to become incarcerated themselves than the general population. Additionally, a family member's incarceration also effects children's mental health. Studies show that over seventy percent of children with incarcerated parents struggle with emotional or psychological disorders including difficulty forming attachments and problems with authority, anxiety, grief, low-self-esteem and aggression.¹ These children need support and Amazing Grace of Cape Cod Inc. is the *ONLY* program in Massachusetts designed to exclusively support these children.

Evidence shows that stable, caring relationships and exposure to opportunities families may not be able to provide are key factors for achieving our goal: breaking the cycle of family incarceration. We do this by welcoming children when they are 8-11 years old and supporting them through adolescence and into adulthood. Since 2013, 90 children from 74 families have joined our community and participated in these offerings:

- **Amazing Grace I (AGI) for youth ages 8-11** is a week-long residential camp experience at the South Shore YMCA's Camp Burgess in Sandwich. Taking full advantage of 300+ acres of forest and meadows as well as Spectacle Pond, our AG Kids swim, go boating, play outdoor games, do arts and crafts, work with farm animals, test skills on the rope courses, hike in the woods, and more. Volunteers from churches and other organizations across the cape mentor the children and the Y's trained counselors guide specialized activities.
- **Amazing Grace II (AGII) for youth ages 12-15** combines fun and service during a week-long residential camp experience at the South Shore YMCA's Camp Burgess for children who have participated in AGI.
- **Mentor-in-Training (MIT) for youth age 16** is a year-round leadership program that starts with a week-long camp experience and trains campers who participated in AGI/AGII to transition to Jr Mentors.
- **Junior Mentors for youth age 17** enables young adults who participated in AGI/AGII, paired with AGI Mentors, to provide peer leadership.
- **AG Mentors for young adults age 18+** invites our graduates to be role models for the younger children by continuing to participate in AG's camp experiences and year-round activities.

¹ Laakso, J. & Nygaard, J. (2012). Children of incarcerated parents: How a mentoring program can make a difference. *Social Work in Public Health*. 27. 12 – 28.

- **Monthly gatherings for all ages and all family members** maintain relationships with peers and AG mentors.
- **SemiAnnual Family Camp** enables AGKids to share favorite camp activities with parents/guardians/siblings.
- **Adventurer's Club** are quarterly gatherings and activities tailored specifically for our older AGII kids.

Beyond the fun and joyful memories, our week-long summer camp experiences and monthly activities, many which include siblings and parents/guardians, help the children build self-esteem, gain confidence, identify and share their gifts, learn to express needs and negotiate differences, as well as develop cooperation skills. With guidance from trusted mentors, they learn to make positive, productive choices in their young lives.

Our expectation (and experience thus far) is that nurturing these children in a supportive community of peers with similar family situations and with adults who care, ultimately, leads these children to choose life-giving instead of risk-making decisions that could lead to incarceration. The parents/guardians of AG Kids consistently credit the AG community and its support as a critical element of their child's healthy development. With many of our first participants now in their 20s, we are hearing directly from them about the ways they claimed greater resiliency, confidence, and a healthier, positive outlook on their future because of their experiences with the Amazing Grace community.

Description of Need

It is difficult to determine how many children impacted by incarceration live on the Cape and southeastern MA. No direct data is available. By extrapolating known statistics, there are likely *over 1,650 children* that Amazing Grace could serve.² We would like to make Amazing Grace available to as many of them as possible. To do this, three things need to grow together: the number of children, the number of mentors we recruit to support them, and the funds we raise to provide them with meaningful experiences and opportunities.

Program Goals and Objectives

Last year we identified two primary objectives to meet our long-term goal of breaking the cycle of family incarceration: maintaining established programs and implementing the strategic plan we developed last year. These objectives continue and have been using the Sagamore Bridge replacement as a helpful metaphor. We are operating two bridges: one established, in use, that needs to be maintained, and another being built to create increased capacity in response to recognized needs.

- **MAINTAINING ESTABLISHED PROGRAMS**

The deanery and diocese have consistently supported this first objective by contributing to the cost of providing our **residential summer camp experiences and monthly activities** at locations across the cape. We estimate that it costs \$1984/child for them and their extended families to participate in week-long camp experiences and year-round programs and activities. ***This summer we anticipate welcoming 24 returning youth:***

- AGI - 4 boys and 3 girls (8-11),
- AGII - 6 boys and 3 girls (12-15),
- MITs – 4 boys (16-17), and
- Jr Mentors - 2 boys and 2 girls (17-18).

We also hope to welcome 13 new AGI children. This will depend on our ability to recruit at least 6 additional mentors so that we can open a new tent for boys. (Initial projections we are at capacity if we only have returning mentors.) Until new mentors are recruited, AGI applicants will be put on a waiting list, a first in 13 summers.

² Nationwide, 2.2 million men and women are incarcerated in state and federal prisons, 50% of whom are parents with approximately 1.7 million minor children. Massachusetts state prisons house more than 12,000 inmates. There are over 3,300 inmates housed on the south shore in County Houses of Corrections and Jails (Barnstable, Bristol, and Plymouth, and Duke Counties). If half of these inmates have children, there are at least 1,650 eligible children on the cape. Massachusetts Department of Corrections 2013 Prison Trends, <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/docs/doc/research-reports/pop-trends/prisonpoptrends-2013-final-5-21-2014.pdf>.

• **NEW INITIATIVES**

- We need to **expand leadership development opportunities** for our 12–18-year-olds and plan to turn our mentor-in-training into a year-round program. This will include sending 4 youth to the NH Teen Institute (<https://www.nhteeninstitute.org>) to participate in their week-long June 2026 summer leadership program, then sharing what they learn with the AG community in August. To make this happen, *we need to raise the additional \$10,000* approved in the 2026 AG Budget to cover the program fee and transportation.
- We also are **expanding volunteer opportunities** as the Board reactivates our committee structure to support staff and expand effectiveness. This will include inviting volunteers join board committee liaisons and staff to recruit youth and mentors, develop programs and services, expand marketing and communications efforts, and manage fundraising and grant writing.
- Last year we worked with CCB Media to add radio PSAs to our recruitment strategy and were able to add 10 new children and 10 new mentors. We plan to add social media this year.

Program Evaluation

We continue to implement formal and informal program evaluation practices: surveys for the children and their parents/guardians immediately after camp, evaluation dinner with mentors with story sharing and needs assessment, and family check in opportunities while calling to gauge participation in monthly activities.

Grant Request

The Cape & Islands Deanery request \$3,405 for 2026 in support of Amazing Grace.

An award of \$3,405 grant will cover most of the cost for two children to participate in our summer camp experience and our monthly activities. The direct cost of camp and monthly activities, *not including staff costs*, is \$62,250 or \$1,778 for each of our 35 active children.

2026 Budget

Anticipated Income		Anticipated Expenses	
• YMCA Scholarships	\$1,900	• Administrative Expenses	\$14,250
• Clubs and Organizations	4,000	• Strategic Plan Implementation	15,000
• Grants	90,000	• Personnel salaries, benefits, fees	104,500
• Faith Communities	20,000	• Camp Expenses	40,250
• Individual Donors	30,100	• <u>Year Round Activities</u>	<u>22,000</u>
• Fundraisers	10,000	TOTAL	\$196,010
• <u>Businesses</u>	<u>10,000</u>	Expenses incurred over budget will be drawn from savings	
TOTAL	\$166,000	Bank Starting Balance	\$226,034
		<u>Total Expense less Income</u>	<u>-30,000</u>
		Reserve after 2026 Expense	\$196,034

Signatures


Clergy


Project Contact Person

March 9, 2026
Date

February 28, 2026
Date

Amazing Grace 2025-2026





Fall Activities 2025

SUN
SEPT 14

Pirate's Cove Mini Golf
2-4pm
728 Main St., South Yarmouth
*This event is a camper event (drop off or one guardian).



SAT
OCT 18

Tony Andrew's Farm for Fall Fun
2-4pm
394 Old Meeting House Rd
East Falmouth



SUN
NOV 9

Ten Pin
3-5pm
769 Iyannough Rd, Hyannis
*This event is a camper event (drop off or one guardian).



SAT
DEC 13

Fin's Up Water Park (Margaritaville)
3-5pm
1225 Iyannough Rd, Hyannis



EVENTS 2026

Save the date for all of our AG meetups in the first half of 2026. Use the QR code below to register for the first 3 events (Jan-Mar).

10 JAN ICE SKATING

4-6pm
Hyannis Rec Center,
141 Bassett Ln, Hyannis

7 FEB SEA STAR RESEARCH @ MBL

2-4pm,
Marine Biological Lab
7 MBL St, Woods Hole

8 MAR FAMILY DINNER-COOK + SERVE

3:30-7:30pm
St. Mary's Church
3055 MainSt., Barnstable

10-12 APR FAMILY CAMP WEEKEND

Fri evening-Sun morning
at Camp Dream Day in
Brewster.

3 MAY CAMP BURGESS OPEN HOUSE

1-4pm
Camp Burgess
75 Stowe Rd, Sandwich

17 MAY NANTUCKET BIKE TRIP (AG2 AND MITS ONLY)

Time TBD
Nantucket

7 JUN FISHING OUTING

1-3pm
Camp Greenough
227 Pine St, Yarmouthport

Save the Date
for camp 2026:
Aug 16-21st

Sign up for
January-March
activities here

