

Annual Report 2021

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Congregation Meeting

January 23, 2022

Zoom

Agenda

Agenda – Congregational Meeting January 23, 2022

1. Opening Prayer and Devotion
2. Review/approval of minutes from June 2021 Congregational Meeting
3. Financial Report
4. Senior Pastor's Report
5. Principal/School Report
6. Election of Officers, Council Members and members of boards
7. Approval of Grace Bylaws
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Congregation Statistics 2021

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Baptisms | 11 |
| Confirmations | 11 |
| New Members (adults and children) | 22 |
| Transfer Out | 4 |
| Released | 0 |
| Deaths | 14 |
| Grace membership – baptized | 1,200 |
| Grace membership – confirmed | 982 |

Dear Friends in Christ,

As we reflect on another year that has had its share of challenges, I cannot help but be thankful for the wonderful ways in which the light of Jesus Christ continues to shine at Grace. As a congregation we have navigated through unknown waters, and it is in these times of uncertainty that we also see God at work through the people at Grace.

Members of Grace's Church Council have been a source of strength and guidance throughout the past year. As we faced unprecedented circumstances, I appreciated the thoughtful ways each person contributed to the conversations and considered decisions for our Church and School. Their faith, dedication and love for Grace, and desire to help our congregation and school through this time was a blessing to both observe and partake in.

The work of our three boards; the Board of Spiritual Life, the Board of Discipleship, and the Board of Finance and Property, remained strong throughout the year. Each of the boards and the various committees that rolled into each board found ways to persevere and continue God's work in new and creative ways. Many gatherings and meetings continued to convene over Zoom, and we were grateful that many returned to meeting in-person. One thing became overwhelmingly clear; God's work continued, despite challenges, to serve the people of Grace and within the greater community. I am grateful to the numerous individuals (too many to list!) who share their talents and passions to serve at Grace. Personally, by serving in the role of president one of the things I will cherish most from this time is the opportunity to be more connected to the great and many ways the people of Grace serve as the light of Christ.

We have continued to adapt the ways we can safely worship at Grace. I am sure you will agree, there is something extra special and profound about worshipping together in person again, and comforting knowing that there are others worshipping with us via livestream. All those preparing for each service and working behind the scenes, our talented choir and musical offerings, our youth serving, our ushers taking greater care, and of course, our pastors leading worship all help make the worship experience spiritual and meaningful. This community in faith provides such hope and strength.

While we still face uncertainty as we move forward each day, I continually count my blessings for the ways Grace continues to shine. It is the people of Grace who worship, serve, continue to work on important matters and giving of themselves that makes our community so special. None of us could have anticipated what we would face, and I am grateful to God for leading me to this role at this time for Grace. It has been an honor to serve in the role of Council President over the past two years. My gratitude is immeasurable. I give thanks to those I have had the privilege to work alongside, and I look forward to the ways God will continue to guide us in the days ahead!

Yours in Christ,

Jade Augustine, President

Grace Lutheran Church and School

The Rev. David R. Lyle, Senior Pastor – 2021 Annual Report

“But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.” Isaiah 43:1-3b

It’s tempting to say that 2021 was another year dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic. I prefer to say that it was another year in which the grace and peace of God were made manifest in manifold ways. Yes, the year began amid a surge that prevented us from worshipping in large groups and ended in the middle of the Omicron surge. Yes, it was a year filled with challenges. Nevertheless, God’s grace was alive and well at Grace.

There are many highlights for me, including (but not limited to): a Spirit-filled Vacation Bible School in August; the renewal of GLOW services during the summer; participation in Faith Sharing groups; the emergence of our refugee ministry; and in-person worship on Christmas Eve. One of my favorite moments each year is the breath between the dimming of the lights and the first few notes of “Once in Royal David’s City.” It was such a joy to have that moment restored this year.

I am grateful for so many partners in the ministry of the gospel. For Pastors Costello and Medlin, who proclaim Christ in many ways. For Principal Koehne, who has ably led Grace School through this year. For our staff and faculty and all our lay leaders. I am particularly grateful to Jade Augustine, outgoing President, and Ed Mason, outgoing Chair of the Board of Spiritual Life. I cannot imagine leading Grace throughout the past two years without their faithful dedication. They both continually went over and above the call of duty to provide service and leadership to Grace. Thank you.

I am grateful, too, for new additions to our church staff. Esther Armstrong transitioned to the Administrative Assistant role. Her skills and her faith bless our community. José Meza joined our team as Technology Manager, and his skill makes our worship services (and so much more) better.

Grace also suffered great losses this year. Death was too present a power. Still, we gather in hope, not fear. As the Lord spoke through Isaiah long ago, the waters will not overwhelm us; the fires will not burn us. Through the saving work of Jesus Christ, death will not hold us. Do not be afraid!

I am now halfway through my Doctor of Ministry program at Candler School of Theology (Emory University). My coursework and research have been sources of joy and blessing. Thank you for the financial support for this work and for the prayers that attend me.

I encourage you to read each page of this report. God has been up to so much at and beyond Grace this year. Thank you for sharing in the mission and ministry entrusted to us. For the sake of Christ, be not afraid.

The Rev. Troy Medlin, Associate Pastor – 2021 Annual Report

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. Philippians 1:3

From my first day among you, which was already over one year ago, until now I have constantly given thanks to God for each of you and for our sharing in the gospel. I am grateful to God for all the ways that sharing has been made manifest during this past calendar year.

2021 proved to be filled with just as much uncertainty and ever-changing circumstances as 2020 as we continue to live through the COVID-19 pandemic. Given what has been our reality I am most grateful for all the times in 2021 when we have been able to gather in person, here, around bread, wine, water, word, and one another. These opportunities to be together, centered on the promises of our baptism and nourished by God's word and meal have been an incredible gift to me. It is an honor to be one of your pastors and to walk beside you on this Spirit led journey.

Pastoral Acts:

This past year it has been a privilege to be alongside you as members of our community experience life passages as we journey through our baptismal waters.

In 2021 I presided at 3 funerals alongside Pr. Lyle, preached at 1 funeral alongside Pr. Lyle, preached and presided at 5 funerals/memorial services. I also presided at the graveside service of someone not affiliated with Grace in any way. I had the opportunity to preside at 4 baptisms. And I was able to officiate 1 wedding at Grace during the past year.

Other Ministry Highlights:

I have been able to provide pastoral care frequently through phone calls and communion visits when appropriate.

One highlight, especially in this past year has been getting to connect with more of you both in person and on zoom.

I was able to work alongside Bill Koehne, Julie Modrich, and Joanna Schubkegel as we created a new safe practices policy for our church and school. This is meaningful and important work, and I am thankful for their partnership.

Having the opportunity to share confirmation teaching duties with Pr. Lyle has allowed me to be a part of this meaningful time in the life of the young people in our congregation who are preparing to affirm their baptisms.

I have been able to work alongside the Board of Discipleship as we continue to live into our identity as a place for information sharing, collaboration, and shared ministry. This past year the refugee ministry was re-started after initial conversations here and the ministry fair that happened in Nov. was dreamed up and planned at the board level with much appreciated collaboration with Julie Modrich. These kinds of cross-committee events and ministries are what the Board of Discipleship is at its best and it is a joy for me to be a part of their work. I also count it a privilege to work with and alongside each committee that rolls up to the Board of Discipleship.

It has been a meaningful task to facilitate the Men of Grace group that meets monthly for conversation, reflection, and community. Facilitating Young Adult Theology on Tap which meets monthly for conversation, reflection, and community has also been enriching both vocationally and spiritually. Topics of conversation have included sin, being saved by grace, and the trinity, just to name a few.

Working with the Grace Youth Group has also been a joy. We have navigated the pandemic, meeting in different ways to foster community, conversation, and service rooted in faith. I am excited to be attending the ELCA Youth Gathering this summer with at least 9 high schoolers and 4 adult leaders from Grace. I am also thankful to Julie Modrich for her work with Children and Family Ministry. Her gifts help to make that ministry flourish. It is wonderful to work alongside her.

My prayer for this coming year is that our sharing in the gospel continues to grow deeper and continues to bear more fruit as we love, grow, and serve together. May the waters of our baptism continue to flow over us and renew us day by day as we follow our crucified and risen savior into the future.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Troy E. Medlin
Associate Pastor

Grace Lutheran School – 2021 Annual Report

Bill Koehne, Principal

We experienced another unique year in 2021, full of challenge and also great accomplishments.

The challenge of teaching through a pandemic has remained. It is hard to believe we are now in the 3rd school year of its impact. We no longer live-stream classrooms and most classes are back in their typical rooms, but masks and social distancing are still necessary and instruction combining grade levels is minimal. Athletic competitions are back, but attendance at events has been limited.

While there has been a lot of discussion nationally around learning loss due to the pandemic, our students have thrived. Our Fall, 2021 MAP test results (a nationally normed standardized test) showed that Grace students grew more over the last year than the national average in nearly every category at every grade level. And, this is compared to pre-pandemic norms. What a testament to the hard work put in by our students and teachers during this challenging time! I am also proud that our teachers, despite the added work and stress of teaching in the pandemic, have stepped up to learn new ways to teach reading which will help all students for years to come.

Some trends attributed to the pandemic have impacted Grace School. This summer several families moved out of the area, but the hard work of our Director of Enrollment enabled us to maintain the school enrollment at 190 to start this school year. We added two new students this month, so enrollment currently stands at 192. We also had several full-time and part-time teachers reassess their careers and leave our faculty. But, God has once again blessed us with wonderful, God-filled, hard-working replacements. Some of our new faculty include Grace Church members Johanna Johnson as music teacher, Keary Bramwell as librarian, Karla Koehne as resource teacher, and Susan Hickey as social worker. I am very proud of our current faculty.

Support for the school seen through our fundraising efforts was definitely a highlight of 2021. Graceful Evening was once again a virtual event, but raised some great funds to support the school generally in addition to allowing us to replace student desks in K-2. Some of those desks had been used by Grace students for more than three decades. Donations to the Annual Fund were at an all-time high, and this fall's walkathon was a record-breaker.

Forward in Faith, a campaign to build a significant endowment to support Grace School, was launched in the fall. To date, more than \$1.3M has been pledged or donated to the campaign. Local events and outreach to our alumni across the country will continue in 2022. A special thank you to the steering committee who has put in countless hours preparing materials, planning events, leading cottage meetings, and making contacts with potential donors!

Finally, it was great to once again be able to celebrate Christmas Eve in-person at Grace. The pandemic kept attendance lower than normal, but there were more than 1000 views of the service on-line. What a wonderful and meaningful way for our students to share the Good News of our Savior with so many people!

God continues to bless Grace Lutheran School in so many ways.

Ministry of Music – 2021 Annual Report

Pastor Michael D. Costello, Grace Cantor

*O sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth. – Psalm 96:1*

If ever there is a time to sing Psalm 96 it is now. Although the COVID-19 pandemic continues to influence the way that we worship, one very rich blessing for Grace Church and School is the fact that we are singing again. That first Sunday over the summer when the congregation, masked, raised their voices in song felt like a resurrection, our songs raised to God once more after an incredibly long journey in the wilderness.

The Parish Choir of Grace Church started to rehearse this fall and uses special nf95 masks when doing so. They rehearse in Fellowship Hall at considerable distance from one another, thankful for the large space with good ventilation. The Parish Choir has been able to sing every Sunday morning and for festival services such as Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. They also participate in the monthly Bach Cantata Vespers and annual Advent/Christmas Concert, all of which has been livestreamed for those who cannot gather in person.

The choirs of Grace School are also rehearsing, using the same masks as the Parish Choir and rehearsing at a minimum of 3 feet distance from one another. Choirs have participated in Sunday morning services during the fall, Advent Evening Prayer services, the Advent/Christmas Concert in December, and for the return of our in-person Children's Services of Lessons and Carols on Christmas Eve. The return of making music daily at Grace School has brought about a new energy and enthusiasm to singing. Our attendance for participation has been strong and children are eager to learn and work toward offering their best in service to God.

I am extremely grateful for all those who continue to lead worship at Grace, for the Worship Committee, and for those who schedule volunteers. I am particularly thankful for those who have continued to serve as our livestreaming crew, now with a new sound system in place, to allow those who cannot be with us in person to worship as best they can from their homes. I will mention here that we are always in need of more people to serve in this capacity. If you or someone you know would like to learn how to operate Grace's sound and camera system, feel free to reach out to me or to José Meza, our new technology coordinator at Grace.

Finally, I would like to express a word of welcome to Johanna Johnson, our new music teacher at Grace School. Janel Dennen retired after 17 years of faithful service, although we continue to see her in the choir and serving in many other ways. Johanna brings a wealth of experience as a music educator, is a skilled musician, and one of the more organized people I know. I'm looking forward to working with her in the years ahead as we continue to form the faith of children who come to Grace School through the gift of music.

Even with masks on, continue to sing a new song unto the Lord. Continue to worship and give thanks, for God has blessed us and has given us voices to offer thanks and praise.

Grace and Peace,



Office of Administration and Finance – 2021 Annual Report

The Office of Administration and Finance welcomed one new staff member in 2021 - Jose Meza joined us in October as the Technology Manager, with Kennedy Johnson “retiring” to finish his education and pursue a full-time career. The rest of us remained the same - Jim McClanahan as Director, Cecelia Thornton as Assistant, Rich Brooks as Facilities Manager, and Jay DeVries as Facilities Assistant.

The Office’s primary goal is to meet your needs and expectations - our members, parents and staff. We are responsible for Grace’s financial transactions, records and reports; facilities upkeep, maintenance, and safety; hardware and software technology; audio/visual technologies; and human resources. In carrying out these responsibilities, the Office works closely with the Board of Finance and Property; the Finance, Property, Endowment, Budget, Stewardship, Personnel, and Benevolence Committees; Church Council; the Church and School Technology and Emergency Preparedness Committees; and Church and School staff.

On the financial front, two activities most meaningful to you are Grace’s annual budget and financial statements:

- 2021-22 - In June, the congregation approved Grace’s 2021-22 budget of \$3,528,700 (3% increase from 2020-21).
 - At the half-way point, we are running a \$67,000 deficit.
- 2020-21 - At the January 2022 Congregational Meeting, the congregation is receiving a draft of the 2020-21 financial statements.
 - Church and school revenue was well under budget. Fortunately, church and school operating expenses were also well under budget. Nevertheless, we suffered a \$188,000 operating deficit.
 - The 2020-21 financial statements are in the process of being audited by an outside accounting firm, as is required by Grace policy every three years.

As to facilities, Grace’s solar panels installed in January 2020, generated 12.5% of our electricity needs in 2021 (11% last year). The percentage continues to increase because we reduced electricity consumption by 15.8% in 2021 (14% last year). Last year, we changed the gym and exterior light bulbs to LEDs, and added smart thermostats and energy efficiency features to our heating and air-conditioning systems. This year, we changed the rest of the interior light bulbs to LED.

On the technology front, we added a third sanctuary camera to enhance the live-streaming experience, and we just installed a new sanctuary sound system to improve the in-person experience.

On the human resources side, in conjunction with the Personnel Committee and Church Council, we continue to consider employee welfare matters and improve the Employee Handbook to incorporate fair, clear and complete policies and practices.

Our goal is to serve you by keeping you informed about financial matters and making Grace as attractive, comfortable, useful and safe as possible. We welcome your ideas and suggestions about improving our financial systems and reporting; improving the appearance, condition and functionality of our facilities; improving our technology; and improving our employee policies and practices.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim McClanahan, Director

Communications – 2021 Annual Report

Gwen Gotsch, Communications Coordinator

It's been a long year here at Grace.

That's a true statement, though news to no one. The 600-plus emails sent through Constant Contact in 2021 by Grace Church and Grace School tell a story of constant change and adaptation in the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic. The news and activities they chronicle tell a story of mission and ministry "Together in Christ" through all the challenges.

It's heartening for me to see that recipients actually open (and read) the many emails they receive from Grace Lutheran Church and School. Open rates reported on our Constant Contact dashboard are currently averaging 50 percent or higher. The most-clicked link in every week's Sunday Is Coning email is always the one to the worship folder. This may reflect members' desire to know the details of Sunday morning worship, but I believe it's also about people staying in touch with one another through the Prayer Page.

It takes more work to stay in touch these days. Two years of pandemic restrictions have meant that many of us stay closer to home and don't plan as far ahead as we once did. We need last-minute reminders about Wednesday GLOW worship, last-minute prompts to sign up for a meal or gathering, and the all-important "day-of" links to online worship and meetings on Zoom. Emails keep families in touch with Sunday School and Confirmation, remind youth about Teen Talk discussions, and bring us together for service and fellowship. Emails were also the primary communication vehicle for information about vaccine clinics held here at Grace in 2021. A new monthly email newsletter from Pat Gulik, our Parish Nurse, featuring links to information on healthy living has also had a good response.

Print publications — Grace Notes and the yellow Weekly Announcements — returned this fall after more than a year on hiatus. The Grace Notes mailing crew, the key ingredient in delivering a monthly newsletter to our members' homes, has been back at work in person this fall. (They need more volunteers. Call Grace for more information.)

Jordan Easton, former Director of Marketing for Grace School, led a team of staff members who worked with a website developer to create a new website for Grace School, which went live last summer. The design was also cloned into new sites for Bach Cantata Vespers and Grace Church which were built out last summer by Pastor Costello and me. The new sites look great on mobile screens as well as on computers. I continue to tweak the copy and the architecture of the site to better serve first-time visitors as well as church members.

As Communications Coordinator I worked with Grace volunteers on a number of other projects this year, including the Forward in Faith Endowment Campaign for the school and the Lent and Advent daily devotions written by Grace members and published at habitsofgrace.blog.

January 2022 finds me grateful for wise, gracious and patient colleagues, for singing in worship services, and for projects that call for creativity along with accurate copying and pasting of URLs. May we continue to recognize the blessings in all that God is calling us to do here at Grace.

Board of Discipleship – Annual Report 2021

Committee Members:

Stephanie Wilkening (Social Ministry), Scott Street (EEC), Laura Merwin (Adult Education), Bill Koehne (School), Jessica Bullock (Benevolence), Karin Danganan (Justice & Peace), Pastor Troy Medlin (Church), Ryan Balock (Library)

2021 was a busy year for the committees housed within the Board of Discipleship. You will read more about the individual accomplishments within this report. With COVID limiting our ability to gather in-person, most of our gatherings were held online. During these sessions, the Board of Discipleship worked to ensure the various committees were coordinating efforts across the Church and School in the best ways possible.

In late summer of 2021, the Board of Discipleship identified an opportunity in our calendar to bring back the Ministry Fair. COVID allowed us enough of a break to target late November for the Fair and we were able to host several committees from across the Church and School in the Church atrium between services on November 21st. We're grateful for everyone who participated and perused the tables of information. It was heartening to see and hear a vibrant gathering of members learning about all the great things the hands of Grace are working on.

Looking forward to 2022, the Board will work alongside the Justice and Peace committee on their important work around racial equity in the Grace community and once again organize the Ministry Fair in November.

As always, our many committees and their respective activities are open to all Grace members, and we hope you will consider attending an event or exploring the possibility of joining!

I also wanted to thank Shawn Vogen for his time and efforts over the past few years as a member of the Board of Discipleship. Shawn has stepped aside from his formal Board position, but we certainly look forward to his participation in developing our Church youth in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Ryan Balock

Chairperson, Board of Discipleship

Children and Family Ministry - 2021 Annual Report

During this past year with the many challenges presented by the COVID pandemic, Children and Family Ministry has continued to focus on helping students explore faith and Christian living in partnership with other ministries of Grace Church. We found creative new ways to engage with families during these days of social distancing and remote learning and to deal with the challenges of finding volunteers to implement our Faith Formation programs.

Faith Formation Zoom check-ins

As we began a new calendar year, we checked in with families via Zoom. We wanted to hear how they were doing as well as share some plans for 2021. Families met our new associate pastor, Troy Medlin and learned about the schedule and curriculum for the coming months. They in turn, shared their thoughts on remote faith formation classes and on how we could best support them and their child(ren) in 2021.

Faith Formation instruction highlights

- **Sunday School through May 2021.** Gwen Gotsch and Julie Modrich led Sunday school on Zoom in the first part of 2021. Materials for each lesson and other educational materials, were created, packaged and delivered to our families at regular intervals. Weekly emails continued to keep families informed about activities and service projects.
- **This fall Sunday School (age 3 to 6th grade)** enrolled 15 preschool through kindergarten and 35 first through sixth grade children who participate in person on Sunday mornings.
- **Confirmation.** Eleven ninth-graders were confirmed in October. We currently have 10 confirmands in our eighth grade class and 15 in seventh grade. Since October, confirmands have been gathering in-person in the Memorial Garden or Fellowship Hall led by Pastor Lyle and Pastor Troy.
- **Mentors Ministry** led by Esther Armstrong and Jade Augustine continued through May via Zoom for eighth graders and their mentors. In the summer, we were able to gather outside for fellowship and faith conversation in the Bairds' backyard. By fall, we were able to host a mentor session outside of Fellowship Hall as Witness and Confirmation Sunday quickly approached. Linda and Scott Street are the mentor leaders for the new group of mentors of current eighth graders. They were matched up in late October and meet safely in the school library.
- **Ministry Fair and Advent activities.** On November 21 Grace members of all ages gathered during the Education Hour for fellowship and opportunities to get involved with various committees and boards at Grace. In the gym, the high school youth led a blanket tying project, and children and families created advent devotional activities for the home.
- **Combined church and school events.** Thirty middle-schoolers from Grace Church and School gathered for Christmas cheer, caroling, pizza and gift exchange at the Schubkegel's home in December. The Chili Cookoff, scheduled in January and the Harvest Festival scheduled late October planned in cooperation with Grace School's Parent Organization, was canceled because of COVID.
- **Communion Retreat.** Twelve fourth graders and their parents attended the one-evening retreat on March 5 led by Pastor Lyle and Pastor Troy. Students designed and glazed a chalice and decorated a white garment with symbols of their life and faith. Families created videos of their child answering questions about their white garments. These were shared with the congregation by Gwen Gotsch. The families of our first communion students worshiped and communed together in person on Palm Sunday.

Service projects to stay in touch

Throughout the year, children and their families have come to Grace to participate in various service projects. A New Year's gift bag project for 30 Harmony homebound seniors, a Valentine's project for Beyond Hunger, Holy Week lunches packed for The Night Ministry and again in November, and a Pentecost project for clients of Housing Forward.

Together in Christ,
Julie Modrich, Children's Ministry Coordinator

Elementary Education Committee – 2021 Annual Report

Board Members: James Claud (chairperson), Joanna Schubkegel, Thedora Brown, Sara Chizzo. Ed Kelly, Jo-Ellyn Dorsey, Scott Street (Bill Koehne (Grace School Principal) and Rev. David Lyle are non-voting members.)

Per Grace by-laws, the Elementary Education Committee is responsible for overseeing the operations of Grace School. The EEC accomplishes this by setting policy for the School (subject to the Board of Discipleship and congregational oversight), receiving monthly reports from the principal and interacting with the principal to set goals for and to deal with issues affecting the administration of the Church's day school ministry.

In 2021 the board did the following:

Funding

- Bill and a committee member participated in a Grace Endowment Committee in order to develop and implement a three-year fundraising campaign for a school endowment, which will help ensure the financial sustainability of the school. The Endowment Committee facilitated around 13 cottage meetings so far with Grace School parents, alumni, and Grace Church members and has raised roughly \$1.2 million in pledges with an overall campaign goal of \$5 million.

Increased Communication/Expanded Representation

- communicated with teachers via the School Leadership Team consisting of teachers nominated by their peers and administration.
- Recruited Thedora Brown, an African American Grace Parent to join the E.E.C.
- The EEC Hosted a GLOW event in the summer and celebrated the role the school plays at Grace.
- Established an exit interview process

Academics

- Encouraged expanding the differentiated opportunities for math students

Covid Response

- communicated with a Covid Task Force made up of the School Leadership Committee, two EEC members, Dr. Hodges (a medical adviser) and Bill.
- approved safety guidelines and adjustments to classrooms and school schedule to ensure student and teacher safety

Administration

- surveyed teachers and evaluated the principal.
- dealt with personnel issues and concerns, as well as hiring decisions.

Marketing

- An EEC member served on the team to hire, review, and guide the completion of a new website for the school.
- helped host the donut-making and sales for the Oak Park Farmer's Market.

Parents

- The EEC conducted a parent survey to gauge satisfaction on a range of topics.

Finances

- a committee member regularly attended church finance committee meetings and updating the EEC on financial matters impacting the day school ministry.
- an EEC member took part in the Grace Budget Committee meetings.

Adult Education – 2021 Annual Report

Committee Members: Ted Anton, Chair, Troy Medlin, pastoral representative, Martin Baumgaertner, Dan Cattau, Jim Kerns, Hannah Langhoff, and Laura Merwin, BOD representative.

In general, we schedule sessions that correspond to seasonal and societal topics, generally scripturally-based, and pay a great deal of attention to drawing quality speakers. We use feedback and suggestions from congregation members to select speakers covering a diversity of important, timely topics tied to the church calendar. With our Zoom format (during the first part of the year) and a cautious return to in-person sessions in the fall meant that during 2021, we have limited Adult Education sessions to one per Sunday.

Through spring and summer 2021, we hosted both speakers and audience members on Zoom. Our first speaker in January was Pastor Troy Medlin, sharing his faith journey as part of his introduction to Grace. This was followed by Grace member Katie Wasson (Loyola University Medical School) speaking on medical ethics during the pandemic, Danny Carroll (Wheaton College) on the book of Amos, Michael Costello (Grace) on the experience of the pandemic at Grace School, documentarian Angela Doll on the Orthodox response to climate change, Reverend Stephen Ray (University of Chicago) on the locality of morality, Ken Briggs (*New York Times* religion reporter) on biblical literacy, and Stephen Bouman (ELCA) on Lutheran Evangelism. During the summer, we hosted Jill Baumgaertner (Wheaton College) and Michael Costello on his adaptation of her poetry to music, Ole Schenk (Grace) on his faith journey, and Jason Boyd, director of Washington DC-based nonprofit, Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) on refugee issues involving children.

In the fall, we were able to return to the Seminar Room and host speakers in person once more. We have continued to livestream speakers on Zoom for those who are unable or uncomfortable to be at Grace in person, and this has been successful. Our in-person and virtual audiences together have generally approximated the size of an average in person audience before the pandemic. We have also received positive feedback from those who enjoy the option of attending remotely or when out of town, and so plan to continue this practice.

Fall speakers included Peter Tierney (Lumen Christi) on science and faith, Pastor Dave Lyle (Grace) on his major theological influences, Marvin Wickware (LSTC) on race and emotions, Linda Street (Grace) on the refugee ministry, Lori Wilbert (Statesville chaplain) on restorative justice, Lori Martin (Grace) on health care in retirement, Elizabeth Palmer (Christian Century) on best books of the year, and Rhea Sprecher (Grace) on the nativity in art.

Our total attendee count for 2021 is approximately 750. As can be seen in the above listings, we have continued to ensure that speakers address important and timely topics, including the pandemic and social justice issues (both in the US and globally). We are using technology to reach Grace members in more ways and to incorporate speakers from outside the Chicago region. In 2022, we hope to continue to offer Adult Education as a forum to talk, think and explore our faith in a way that inspires and rejuvenates Grace members.

Respectfully submitted, Laura Merwin

BENEVOLENCE COMMITTEE - 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

The committee continues to focus on ensuring the needs of humanity as a top priority – alleviating homelessness, hunger and providing for the needs of families and young people. We believe God continues to call our committee into a giving model that emphasizes increased financial support to fewer organizations.

The following process was used by the Benevolence Committee to select organizations to support.

Review Criteria

There were two essential criteria for all selected benevolence ministries:

- Its alignment with a Christian mission
- Organization is a non-profit organization

In addition to these essential criteria, the following review criteria were used:

- **Impact Donation will Make.** This review criteria was based on the number of individuals that would be served based on the dollars contributed.
- **Service Area.** The general service area was weighted (e.g. education, greater church mission, family and/or basic human services) with a preference for organizations serving basic human services during the pandemic.
- **Grace Lutheran connection.** The level of connection (e.g. member volunteers) with Grace Lutheran Church of River Forest was also part of the review criteria.
- **Responsiveness.** Another factor was the level of responsiveness, including providing periodic updates was used as part of the evaluation criteria.
- **Geographic Proximity.** The proximity of the organization to Grace Lutheran was another factor, based on the pandemic, with a preference given for organizations that were located closer to the church.
- **Peace & Justice priority.** Another factor was the commitment of the organization to peace and justice.

Each member of the committee evaluated the different organizations. Then, the committee met for two sessions to evaluate and develop a final recommendation as a group. The final list was then submitted to the Council.

There is \$196,000.00 designated for the Benevolence distribution in the current fiscal year. Attached you will find a list of benevolence ministries that were funded.

Thanks,

Jessica Bullock
Chair
Benevolence Committee

Benevolence Ministries

Beyond Hunger (OPRF Food Pantry)
Cabrini Green Legal Aid Clinic
Center for Christian Education
Chicago Cornerstone Academy
Concordia University - Chicago
ELCA Global Mission
ELCA Metropolitan Chicago Synod
ELCA World Hunger
Harmony Community Cares
Hope for Grieving Children - Africa
Housing Forward
Kidz Express

Lawndale Christian Legal Center
Lutheran Child & Family Svcs. of Illinois
Lutheran Disaster Response
Lutheran School of Theology Chicago
Lutheran Social Services of Illinois
Navajo Lutheran Mission
New Moms
Night Ministry
Norwood Senior Care (Bethesda)
Valparaiso University
Walther Christian Academ

Justice and Peace Committee – 2021 Annual Report

Committee Members:

Karin Danganan, Sue Foran, Larry Garber, Case Hoogendoorn, Ruth Hughes, Sabrina Maggio, Dick Martens, Miriam Moore, Mary Paulson, Lance Wilkening, Stephanie Wilkening, Pastor Troy Medlin (ex officio)

Racial and social justice is at the heart of everything we on the Justice and Peace Committee do to move us toward a more just community, society, and world. All our activities support these principles. In 2021, we continued to work to live out this Gospel calling.

1. We continue to provide opportunities for the Grace community to learn about racial injustice in our country and our local community. In the fall and winter, our Black Voices at Grace initiative sponsored a discussion series around “Table Topics.” Thirty-five Grace community members met in small groups, either in person or via Zoom, to share their experiences with life events such as purchasing or renting one’s first home, or buying a car, and to discuss the racial aspects of these events that might not be obvious. Some of these groups will continue in 2022. Our committee also maintains a resource list that can be accessed by any Grace member who wishes to educate themselves further on matters of racial justice. The list includes books, articles, podcasts, and films/documentaries. We also encourage small groups to consider selecting an item for viewing and/or reading and discussion.
2. In the spring of 2021, we collaborated with the Benevolence Committee to identify and recommend for a benevolence grant an organization that is doing racial justice work in the Chicago area. As a result of our joint efforts, Grace made a donation to Lawndale Christian Legal Center, an organization that provides community-led, holistic criminal legal defense to young people in Chicago’s North Lawndale community. We are always happy to collaborate with other Grace committees on efforts toward peace and justice.
3. In November, a delegation from the Justice and Peace Committee took a field trip to Lawndale Christian Legal Center. We met with staff members Amy Campanelli and Tim Jones for a discussion on the numerous life challenges their clients face and how LCLC’s wrap-around services approach keeps young adults of color out of incarceration and guides them to lead productive lives. We were also given a tour of the facilities and learned about their expansion plans.
4. In November, we participated in the Grace Ministry Fair so church members could learn about the ways in which our committee is living out our faith through action.
5. We will continue to work with the Church Council on matters related to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Grace Church and School. We recently received the results of the internal audit/assessment of what our current boards and committees are doing toward racial and social justice, and we will work with the council and boards on next steps. We will also work with the council on a longer-term communication strategy on justice-related matters, both internally and externally. In 2022, we will plan a retreat with church leadership (clergy, council, and boards) to learn more about justice matters, create a vision for justice and peace at Grace, and develop actions to achieve that vision.

Respectfully submitted,

Karin Danganan

Justice and Peace Representative to the Board of Discipleship

Lance Wilkening

Justice and Peace Committee Chair

Library Committee – 2021 Annual Report

Committee Members:

- Linda Street
- Olinda Fink
- Carolyn Garber
- Marilyn Fall
- Pastor Troy Medlin – Resource
- Ryan Balock – Board of Discipleship representative

As much as we had hoped to be returning to “normal” pre-Covid library routines in 2021, we find ourselves continuing to adjust to this “new normal.” That said, the Grace Church Library has found ways to remain relevant. The church library was used as a space for the school library to host the Scholastic Book Fair. As a locked, secure space, it provided a safe and convenient location open to students and parents wishing to purchase items.

The library continues to be a welcoming space for the Cornerstones fellowship. Hearing is often difficult for our seniors in the larger meeting areas at Grace. Cornerstones participants are thankful to have access to the library. We commend the willingness of Grace Staff as they rearrange chairs and tables to facilitate this use of the space.

The seasonal collection of books in the atrium display case has evolved to provide a shared experience with several other church committee groups. Stephen Ministers and the new Refugee Ministry took advantage of this opportunity. Books available in the library related to the work of the specific committees were also displayed so Grace members could find additional written material available in the library for them to check out.

As various committees worked around Covid restrictions, the library continued to support their efforts. Religion and Literature books were ordered so there are at least two copies of each selected text available to ALL Grace members who wish to join in the discussions or to just read the books for their own pleasure. The Evangelism Committee also requested a text “Becoming a Welcoming Church” which is now available for check-out in the library.

Grace Lutheran Church remains a member of the Chicagoland Church Librarians.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Street, Library Committee Chair

Social Ministry Committee – 2021 Annual Report

Committee Members: Rebecca Dahlstrom, Jo-Ellyn Dorsey, Heidi Hamernik, Glenn Johnson, Lisa Lauren, Pastor Troy Medlin (ex officio), Ellie Schnack, Evie Tiemann, Sue Kamba Wahlstrom, Carole Walther, Lance Wilkening, Stephanie Wilkening (chair)

The Social Ministry Committee's mission is to raise awareness about people in need and offer opportunities for hands-on service. Because of the pandemic, the SMC was still somewhat limited in its interaction with the congregation and our partner organizations, but we continued to sponsor many successful initiatives.

The following is a description of the work performed and sponsored by the SMC in 2021.

Housing Forward Meals

Historically, Grace members have provided bag lunches for the homeless at two overnight shelters in Oak Park twice a month, but that mission was halted during the pandemic. In the latter half of 2021, however, congregation members resumed providing lunches to the homeless residing at Housing Forward's transitional housing center in Oak Park. A group from the congregation and community also continues to collect funds internally, purchase prepared meals from a local grocer, and deliver the meals to Housing Forward's transitional housing center.

Meals for the Night Ministry

Committee members cooked and delivered two meals to the Crib, a Chicago homeless shelter run by the Night Ministry for young adults 18-24 years old. Throughout the year committee members and congregation members made sack lunches that were delivered to the Night Ministry and then distributed to Chicago's homeless.

School Supply Drive

The committee collected school supplies including backpacks, notebooks, pens, pencils, glue sticks and crayons for Chicagoland Lutheran Educational Foundation (CLEF), which distributed the items to urban Lutheran schools in Chicago.

Coat Drive

We collected more than 150 children's and adults' winter coats, which were distributed to those in need by Harmony Food Pantry, the Salvation Army in Chicago and Hope House, a halfway house in Chicago's North Lawndale community.

Food Drives and Food Pantry Donations

Monthly donations supply food to Beyond Hunger, Fraternite Notre Dame, Harmony Church and Forest Park food pantries on a rotating basis. In partnership with Grace Lutheran School, the committee also held spring and fall food drives and the proceeds were shared among the pantries.

Harmony Church

Grace members assist in Harmony Church's food pantry work led by Diane Carioscio.

Christmas Giving

We collected gift cards from the congregation for the Night Ministry, Oak-Leyden Adult Developmental Services and Mills Park Tower. We also collected gifts for New Moms, which serves young mothers and their children, and donations to Lutheran Child and Family Services' Christmas drive for its foster children. This year we initiated an Adopt-a-Stocking program for the Night Ministry. In collaboration with Grace School, 85 stockings were made and filled with toiletry and sundry items for the Night Ministry's homeless young adults.

Mitten Tree

In December we sponsored a collection of children's mittens, gloves, hats and scarves. They were distributed in January to Little Leaders of Tomorrow, a Head Start program in Chicago's Austin community. Thanks also to Grace's knitting group for the many beautiful items donated to this drive.

Respectfully submitted,
Stephanie Wilkening, Chair

Board of Spiritual Life – 2021 Annual Report

Elders serving on the Board of Spiritual Life (the “Board”) during 2021 were Jill Baumgaertner, Amy Claud, Jeff Cribbs, Lori Martin, Ed Mason, Paulette Reddel, and Valerie Stefanic.

Under Grace’s bylaws, the Board is charged with (i) providing for the proclamation of the Word and celebration of the sacraments, (ii) attending to the spiritual needs of the congregation, (iii) enhancing the worship life of the congregation, (iv) fostering fellowship within the congregation, and (v) integrating new members into the congregation. The Board works alongside Grace’s Pastors, Cantor, staff, and members of the congregation in implementing these charges.

Elders meet monthly, usually on the fourth Tuesday evening of the month, and otherwise as needed.

The Elders’ duties during 2021 and continuing into 2022 at Grace include the following:

- Elders (i) assist in leading in-person worship in our role as Deacons on Sunday mornings and (ii) visit and serve communion to members of the congregation who are home-bound or in care facilities. In-person service by Elders had been paused in March 2020 through the first portion of 2021 because of the pandemic but has since resumed and is continuing.
- Elders work to strengthen and encourage Grace’s evangelism committee, with the aim of encouraging and equipping the people of Grace to communicate, in word and deed, the good news of Jesus. Prior to 2021 this committee had been inactive for many years but is now active and full of Spirit-driven energy and creativity. Thanks to Julie Hinz, who is ably chairing the committee, and to all those who are serving on the committee.
- Elders work to revive and strengthen Grace’s fellowship committee to support current Christian fellowship opportunities and encourage new avenues for fellowship within the Grace community. Doing this work has been challenging because of COVID concerns, but efforts continue to creatively provide opportunities for fellowship within the Grace community, including, most recently, Advent service dinners. Thanks to Elder Jeff Cribbs, who is ably leading this effort.
- Elders serve as liaisons to the Grace committees over which the Board has oversight under Grace’s bylaws, i.e., Health Cabinet, Worship, Stewardship, New Members, Evangelism, and Fellowship. Thanks to the members of these committees for their faithful efforts in furtherance of God’s work within and through the Grace community.
- Elders meet regularly throughout the year with each Pastor and the Cantor for support, assessment, and accountability.
- At our regular meetings, Elders discuss expressed concerns members of the congregation brought to us or to one of the Pastors or Cantor, with a goal toward enriching the life of the congregation. (Members of the congregation are encouraged to communicate their concerns with any Elder.)
- Elders serve as a sounding board in providing support and guidance, as needed, for our Pastors and Cantor.
- Each month, Elders recognize and acknowledge by written personal notes the service of those parishioners who make special contributions to the parish life of Grace and to the success of Grace’s mission.
- Elders write personal notes of encouragement to confirmands upon their public witness and confirmation.

We acknowledge and thank former Elders who no longer serve on the Board of Spiritual Life but who continue faithfully, alongside current Elders, to serve the Grace congregation in various ways, including serving as Deacons at Grace’s worship and visiting and serving communion to parishioners unable to attend in-person worship.

We acknowledge and thank for their service as Elders Jill Baumgaertner and Ed Mason, whose terms are expiring on January 31, 2022, and who will be leaving the Board.

Mark Bouman and Dan Lehman have been nominated to serve as new Elders on the Board. The Elders look forward to serving with Mark and Dan in 2022. Amy Claud, Jeff Cribbs, Lori Martin, and Valerie Stefanic will continue to serve on the Board in 2022.

Respectfully submitted,
Ed Mason, Board Chair
January 2022

Altar Guild – 2021 Annual Report

The Grace Church and School Altar Guild has continued to evolve its protocols, for communion prep and clean up, as the services moved forward to more “normal” practices and participation in 2021. We continue to use only individual cups with wine and grape juice. Regular host are distributed, by one pastor for each ciborium, and gluten free host are offered in individual paper cups, to limit cross contamination with wheat based host and the touching of more than one communicant. Gift bearers now bring a small glass cruet of wine and regular wafers forward to the altar and assist in serving during communion distribution.

Since common cup is no longer available, two additional individual communion trays were purchased, this year, to assure sufficient elements available for use during higher attendance services.

The congregation may have noticed the absence of the lovely tatted altar cloth, previously routinely used on the back altar. We are grateful to Evelyn and Sandra Grams for the new altar cloth currently in place on the back altar. The “Busse” tatted cloth has been sent to a conservation company for repair and restoration for a return to use for some routine, festival and special occasion services.

We are very grateful to the Altar Guild members who have been carrying the load for Sundays, funerals, school chapel communion services, etc. in 2021. However, this is not a sustainable demand of time for the current pool of workers. Prayers continue for more people to share in this most essential and rewarding ministry at Grace.

“Come, for all is now ready!”

Roberta Gillespie, Grace Altar Guild

Worship Committee Report - 2021 Annual Report

Voting Members: Eunice Eifert, Sarah Gruendler-Ladner, Justin Martin, Marilyn Moehlenkamp, Donna Serpico, Irmgard Swanson (Chair)

Non-voting member: Pastor Michael Costello

Board of Spiritual Life liaison: Jill Baumgaertner

The Worship Committee is charged with providing lay perspective and counsel to the pastors and cantor in matters of liturgy, music, worship resources, scheduling of services and other related areas.

The Worship Committee also assists the various groups who support worship at Grace: Altar Guild, Chancel Guild, Statuary Committee, Ushers, Audio/Visual, as well as Ellen Pullin who schedules the Lectors and Assisting Ministers.

The continued presence of COVID-19 still affects the Grace's worship life and the ability of our committee to gather in person. However, meeting remotely, a number of actions were completed.

- A third camera for live-streamed services was installed.
- New members were added to the Worship Committee and to the audio/visual team.
- The process of conserving the Altar Cloth, tatted by Bob Busse, was begun.
- Expanded use of new hymn resources are being utilized in worship services.
- Duties lists for lectors and assisting ministers were revised.
- Provided for the purchase of Peace Lillies for the chancel and for two more communion trays.
- Participated in the Ministry Fair this past November.
- A new sound system for in-person and livestream services was installed.

The Worship Committee encourages recruitment of additional volunteers for the various supportive groups in worship: Altar Guild, Chancel Guild, Ushers, Gift Bearers, Live-streaming, Bell Choir, Parish Choir, Lectors, Assisting Ministers, and Greeters. Please let us know of your interest in any of the groups.

The Worship Committee continues to be responsive to requests of congregation members, groups, staff, and pastors. We discuss ways to enrich the worship life at Grace in all its aspects and endeavor to meet the needs of Grace Lutheran worship life. Our focus remains centered on bringing the Good News of Christ to all who worship at Grace.

Respectfully submitted, Irmgard Swanson, chair

Health Committee – 2021 Annual Report

Committee members: Bryan Bernard, Margaret Burke, Karen Eckstein, Pat Gulik (parish nurse), Loretta Lattyak, Ruth Reko, Cindy Rohlfing, Leslie Sleuwen, Beverly White, Nancy Wohlford.

Health Promotion: Margaret Danilovich, PT, DPT, PhD from Northwestern University presented “Strategies for Aging Well. Let’s Talk About Balance” via Zoom on October 3, 2021, to Grace members and the community. The Health Committee partnered with River Forest Township Senior Outreach to plan and organize the presentation. Thirty-two people attended.

Throughout the Coronavirus pandemic, emails with Covid and health information were written by Pat Gulik and sent to the congregation via email. Beginning in October this became a monthly email called “Notes from the Parish Nurse” which includes links to important and/or interesting information.

Fellowship: Hosted two events during the summer in Fellowship Hall: 1. “Morning Movie ”on July 14,2021. The movie was “The Hundred Foot Journey”. Twenty-two people attended. 2. Hymn Sing on August 11,2021. Unfortunately, a severe thunderstorm began just before it was time to begin, so only eight people attended.

Vaccine Clinics: A priority of the Health Committee in 2021 was helping to ensure that Grace staff, congregation members, school faculty and staff, as well as Grace school children, obtained Covid-19 vaccines. We were fortunate to do this in partnership with Osco, who supplied the vaccine and administered it, at a time when it was still very difficult to obtain. A total of 592 vaccines were administered at Grace during 2021.

1. One hundred Grace members and staff received their first dose of the Moderna Vaccine on February 6,2021 and the second dose on March 6,2021.

2. On March 23,2021, the Health Committee partnered with Opportunity Knocks and Osco to administer the Johnson and Johnson vaccine to 120 congregation members and participants in the Opportunity Knocks program. Opportunity Knocks is an organization that exists to supports people with intellectual and developmental disabilities by providing programs that provide education, community values and activity to their “Warriors” in the Oak Park, River Forest and Forest Park communities.

3. On November 20 ,2021 twenty-one Grace school children received the Pfizer vaccine followed by the second on December 11,2021. The Health Committee and Grace School parent volunteers hosted these clinics. Booster shots were also available to the congregation and the community-88 boosters were administered.

4. On October 17,2021 one hundred fifteen flu and other vaccines were administered along with 27 Pfizer boosters.

Prayer Shawls: Although they could not meet in person, the knitting group and others continued to provide prayer shawls to our community. At least sixty prayer shawls were distributed.

First Aid: The first aid kits throughout the buildings were inspected and updated.

Monthly Health Committee table: The monthly BP screenings, Health Committee tables and Prayers for Healing stations during worship services remain on hold due to Covid-19 distancing concerns.

Parish Nurse Ministry: Pat Gulik continues in her role as parish nurse and works 25 hours/week. She regularly visits the Cornerstone Bible Study group when it meets (in person or via Zoom) to participate in fellowship, answer questions and provide information. She has also hosted the Finding Hope Support group via Zoom as needed during the pandemic. In order to provide up to date referral information, she met by phone with representatives from local community-based resources and services and attended several webinars about topics

of interest to the congregation. She serves the congregation by utilizing her assessment skills; providing information, presence, emotional and spiritual support; educating; and serving as an advocate. She conducted over 605 visits to accomplish this – to members of the congregation and their affiliates via phone calls, emails and visits, including in her office, at home, in the hospital, in rehab or retirement communities. The decision whether to meet by phone, in person or via email is based on the needs of the congregation member and community Covid status. She facilitated the lending of Grace laptops to two Grace members so that they would be able to participate in the worship of the Grace Community. She participates in a weekly pastoral staff meeting to identify needs and give help where needed; and maintains the church AED machines. She provided information to the staff and school about up-to-date Covid protocols. She takes part in the Advocate Faith Community Nurse group quarterly and meetings of the “Interfaith Mental Health Coalition”.

Submitted by Pat Gulik, RN

New Members Committee – 2021 Annual Report

Committee Members: Pastor David Lyle, Amy Claud (chair), Julie Hinz, and Jordan Easton

The mission of the committee is to help welcome and orient new members to Grace Lutheran Church. In pre-COVID times, the committee members supported the pastors by organizing two new member courses each year, one in the fall and one in the spring. These courses provide education on Lutheran theology and life at Grace. Each session is eight weeks long and ends with a reception into membership. Along the way, we aim to engage new members in the ministries of Grace and help connect them with others in the body of Christ. To that end, we have a mentor program that connects new members with more seasoned ones to help them integrate into congregational life. Typically, the committee meets approximately several times a year and communicates as needed between meetings. Most summers we host a picnic for those who participate in both classes and leaders in the church. Of course, 2021 was (again) anything but normal.

During the first two weeks of March 2020, we began our normal ministry with a solid group of prospective members. When the pandemic hit, we were forced to end our weekly classes. We reached out to our fledgling group to see how they were faring and to offer ways to continue to connect with Grace such as Pastor Lyle's blog and livestream worship. In April of 2021, we reconvened our course on Zoom. This group of 6 was received into membership in May of 2021. We held a small outdoor brunch to welcome them. During this time, we introduced them to their mentors and helped these pairs begin to get to know one another. In June 2021, we convened an almost-normal summer New Members class. To adjust to COVID concerns, we reduced our course by two sessions and met outside in the Christopher garden. This lively group of ten was welcomed into membership in August 2021. They too were matched with mentors and have quickly integrated into the congregation.

The committee has a budget of \$300/year, which we did not spend. Going forward, we will still need a \$300 budget to cover our usual expenses.

We are thankful that God continues to bring wonderful new members to Grace – even during a seemingly never-ending pandemic. The energy and experience they bring to our congregation is a blessing indeed.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Claud

Stewardship Committee – 2021 Annual Report

Committee Members: Candice Hill Buchbinder, Eric Isenberg, Randy Keller, Sarah Gruendler-Ladner, Katie Murphy

In January, Stewardship committee members sent thank you notes to members who gave Thankoffering gifts. A member of the Committee personally signed each letter.

In March, the Grace Stewardship Committee sent a Holy Week message to the congregation expressing gratitude for Grace Church and the many ways our community has remained connected during the pandemic. We emphasized that our important ministry to a world in need continues, and that our offerings support the ongoing ministry of sharing Jesus' love with one another, our community and our world.

In May, a Stewardship email focused on the many ways we remain "Together in Christ: to grow, to love and to serve." The message gave examples of worship and other ministry activities within our community. We emphasized the upcoming end of the fiscal year and asked members to consider an extra gift to Grace.

In June, in anticipation of the end of the fiscal year, Stewardship communications addressed giving. The messages spoke of gratitude for ways we have emerged from the pandemic and "the seeds planted over the years at Grace that continue to bring about many blessings in our life together at Grace Church and School." Messages included an email to the congregation from Pastor Lyle and personal emails from the committee to a segment of the congregation asking members to review their annual giving and prayerfully consider an additional gift to Grace, as they were able.

In August, Stewardship sent an email to the congregation to thank members for their generosity at the end of the fiscal year.

In an article in the September Grace Notes the Stewardship committee expressed thanksgiving for members' support and spoke of how and why stewardship "is about much more than financial gifts. It gives each of us the choice to place our faith and trust in the work we are called to do as one body in Christ, and to give thanks for all that God has given us. And at Grace, we have so many things for which to be thankful." The article listed recent activities at Grace including baptisms, new members and in-person Vacation Bible School.

In November, Stewardship participated in the Ministry Fair, conversing with Grace members about the ways they give of their time and talents. Quotes from these conversations were included in the Stewardship Committee's Thankoffering letter, asking members to prayerfully consider additional gifts to Grace to support its ongoing ministry to our community and our world

Number of Thankoffering gifts received: 92

Total gifts: \$52,105.

Giving statements were sent in May and October.

Respectfully submitted by Candice Hill Buchbinder, Stewardship Committee Chair

Evangelism Committee – 2021 Annual Report

In September 2020 a small group of folks met to talk about faith, God, and to practice having those kinds of conversations. That group is now the first of 6 Faith Sharing Groups that meet regularly (monthly) to simply talk about faith, about how to see God in the world, to express in words what our faith means and what scripture teaches us about living as God's beloved children. In September 2021 a subgroup of these folks established the Evangelism Committee to move these conversations into the larger life of Grace and into the world. Our joy in the Gospel and the enthusiasm of this group and its potential is inspiring, and we look forward to a lot of ideas and activities in 2022.

The Evangelism Team as it exists today is not simply the reincarnation of a past committee. Evangelism, in today's terms, is different than the traditional evangelism of the past. Our focus is not solely missionaries, preaching to the "heathens," etc. but to look at Grace from both the inside and outside, learn what we are doing well and where we can improve on welcoming our neighbors, forming believers who can see and speak their faith, and make everyday faith conversations something as routine and natural as our liturgy.

In the last months, we have hit the ground running, generating a lot of ideas, organizing our next steps, etc. On December 18, 2021, about 25 folks joined together to go caroling in downtown Oak Park. There was a wonderful response to our presence there as well as a nice turnout. Hot chocolate and treats at Grace afterward made the afternoon complete. There is every intention to do it again next December.

The Evangelism Team is already hard at work. Some of what the committee addresses may not be apparent, while other activities will be obvious and available for congregational participation. As we grow collectively, the only requirement is an openness to try something new. We are all called to be the Gospel in this world. One of our hopes is to provide the people of Grace with the tools to speak the Gospel as beautifully as we sing it.

Submitted by: Julie Hinz, Chair

Committee:

Annalise Balock

Ed Mason

Paulette Reddel

Katharine Roller

Linda Street

Scott Street

Endowment Fund Committee – 2021 Annual Report

Appointed Members (subject to term limits): David Hoyem (Chair), Jeff Cribbs, JR Reynolds, Randy Schnack, and David Zyer

Board Member: Elizabeth Thompson

Other attendees: Jim McClanahan (Business Office), Daniel Krout (Treasurer)

Responsibilities

The Endowment Fund Committee (the Committee) is a sub-committee of the Board of Finance and Property. The Committee's main responsibilities are: (1) investment of the endowment funds of the congregation; (2) acceptance of gifts made with special terms or conditions (subject to church council approval); (3) maintaining written procedures for investment and use of each fund in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant or endowment; and (4) reporting to the congregation.

Investment Manager

Since 2013, Grace has used Fiducient Advisors (previously known as DiMeo Schneider), a professional investment consulting firm, to help manage Grace's endowment funds. Fiducient does not make final investment decisions. The firm provides investment analyses and recommendations to the Committee for review and approval. Fiducient is then directed to execute the Committee's investment decisions. The endowment funds are managed in conformance with Grace's Investment Policy Statement, as adopted by the church council.

Investment Overview

For 2021, Grace allocated funds among three primary asset classes, averaging: 60% in equities, 29% in fixed income (e.g., bonds), and 11% in other ("real") assets such as real estate and commodities. The Grace Endowment does not invest in individual stocks, bonds or real estate parcels. Based on Fiducient's recommendations, Grace selects investment funds or nationally recognized investment managers (e.g., Vanguard).

When necessary, the Endowment Funds assets are used as collateral for the congregation to borrow against in order to meet cash flow shortfalls. During calendar year 2021, with church council's approval, the congregation repaid previous borrowings, as follows:

- \$150k cash shortfall borrowing in fiscal 2019
- \$410k mortgage by Pastor Lyle (repaid via a conventional mortgage refinancing)
- \$44k of \$60k borrowing for solar system (rebate proceeds to date).

As of December 31, 2021, the outstanding loan balance was \$20,000, made up of the remaining solar system loan and accumulated interest.

See below for portfolio performance and the investment summary:

2021 FY Grace portfolio return (July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021) = 33.43%

2021 FY Benchmark Target Allocation return: 26.29%

2021 calendar year Grace portfolio return: +12.76%

2021 calendar year Benchmark Target Allocation return: 12.32%

| 2021 Overall Investment Summary: | Investments | Margin Loan |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| January 1, 2021 Investment Balance | 6,239,507 | 615,000 |
| Deposits to the Account: | | |
| Repayment of prior cash flow loan | 150,000 | |
| Repayment of Lyle mortgage | 411,000 | |
| Repayment of Solar Loan | 44,000 | |
| Dividends and interest incoe | 351,925 | |
| Annual Distributions to General Fund and Custodial Funds | (308,736) | |
| Change in market value | 474,415 | |
| Loan interest expense | | |
| Other income or expense (including Fiducient Fee of \$37,000) | (47,026) | |
| | | |
| December 31, 2021 Investment Balance | 7,335,422 | 19,896 |
| December 31, 2021 Margin Loan Balance | (19,896) | |
| | | |
| December 31, 2021 Net Asset Value | 7,315,526 | |

Respectfully submitted,
David Hoyem, Chair

Finance Committee – 2021 Annual Report

Members: Daniel Krout (Treasurer), Elizabeth Henderson (Assistant Treasurer), John Bouman (Vice President), Joel Lueking (Property), Elizabeth Thompson (Endowment)

Other attendees: Jim McClanahan (Business Office), David Lyle (Sr. Pastor), Sara Chizzo (Elementary Education), Candice Buchbinder (Stewardship)

Fiscal 2021 Summary

A financial summary of Fiscal 2021 (ended June 30, 2021) is presented below. During a year squarely within the pandemic era, operating revenues were significantly below 2020 revenues and below budgeted revenues. Operating expenses were also lower than prior year and budget, but not to the same extent, resulting in an operating deficit of \$109,000 after investment income, compared with a \$5000 surplus in fiscal 2020.

| General Fund | | | | | |
|---|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Fiscal 2021 | | | | | |
| July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 | | Fiscal 2021 | Fiscal 2020 | Fiscal 2021 | Fiscal 2021 |
| | | 30-Jun-21 | 30-Jun-20 | Budget | Actual/Budget |
| Revenues | | | | | |
| | Church Contributions and Other Revenue | 1,661,000 | 1,967,000 | 1,961,000 | (300,000) |
| | School Revenue | 1,266,000 | 1,250,000 | 1,365,000 | (99,000) |
| Total Revenues | | 2,927,000 | 3,217,000 | 3,326,000 | (399,000) |
| Expenses | | | | | |
| | Personnel | 2,425,000 | 2,533,000 | 2,547,000 | 122,000 |
| | Benevolence | 197,000 | 183,000 | 195,000 | (2,000) |
| | Property | 270,000 | 387,000 | 367,000 | 97,000 |
| | Boards | 56,000 | 68,000 | 94,000 | 38,000 |
| | School | 98,000 | 73,000 | 128,000 | 30,000 |
| | Administration | 69,000 | 56,000 | 80,000 | 11,000 |
| Total Expenses | | 3,115,000 | 3,300,000 | 3,411,000 | 296,000 |
| | Operating Deficit | (188,000) | (83,000) | (85,000) | (103,000) |
| Investment Revenue and expenses | | 79,000 | 88,000 | 85,000 | 6,000 |
| Net before extraordinary items | | (109,000) | 5,000 | - | (109,000) |
| Extraordinary Items: | | | | | |
| | Paycheck Protection Program forgiven loan | 514,000 | - | - | |
| | Contributions earmarked for asset purchases | 75,000 | - | - | |
| | Transfers: custodial account for asset purchases | 106,000 | - | - | |
| Net Church and School Revenue and Expenses | | 586,000 | 5,000 | - | |

At the onset of the pandemic, the federal government implemented the Paycheck Protection Program (“PPP”) to provide forgivable loans to employers who would retain employees and provide stability in the face of great uncertainty. Grace received a PPP loan in May 2020 which effectively allowed Grace to continue its payroll responsibilities and retain all employees and staff. Loan forgiveness was obtained in June 2021 per the government requirements, resulting in an extraordinary revenue item of \$514,000 in fiscal 2021.

Fiscal 2022 through December 31, 2021, Summary

Grace continues to experience seasonality of cash flow, but we have been in a fairly strong position throughout fiscal 2021 and now in fiscal 2022. Church and school contributions, while below budget, have been aided by other non-budgeted inflows such as the PPP forgiven loan, new school endowment contributions not yet moved to the endowment fund, and other custodial account inflows. In fiscal 2022, we repaid the \$150,000 operating loan still held from fiscal 2019, and we provided \$100,000 for special benevolences in fiscal 2022.

A financial summary of the first six months of Fiscal 2022 (ended December 31, 2021) is presented below.

Operating revenues through six months were higher than for the same period one year ago but still below budgeted revenues. Operating expenses were higher than the prior year but still below budget. The operating deficit for the first six months of Fiscal 2022 was approximately \$67,000 compared with a deficit of \$57,000 in fiscal 2021.

| General Fund July to December 2021 | YTD Actual Thru 12/2021 | YDT Actual Thru 12/2020 | YDT Budget Thru 20/2021 | YTD Budget/Actual |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Revenues | | | | |
| Church Contributions and Other | 939,502 | 849,784 | 1,017,400 | (77,898) |
| School | 643,882 | 659,708 | 746,950 | (103,068) |
| Total Revenues | 1,583,384 | 1,509,492 | 1,764,350 | (180,966) |
| Expenses | | | | |
| Personnel | 1,242,555 | 1,168,955 | 1,326,200 | 83,645 |
| Benevolence | 83,000 | 98,402 | 89,200 | 6,200 |
| Property | 164,907 | 145,322 | 177,400 | 12,493 |
| Boards | 37,450 | 32,235 | 49,000 | 11,550 |
| School | 75,028 | 81,980 | 70,200 | (4,828) |
| Administration | 47,140 | 39,335 | 52,350 | 5,210 |
| Total Expenses | 1,650,080 | 1,566,229 | 1,764,350 | 114,270 |
| Net Total Deficit | (66,696) | (56,737) | - | (66,696) |

Challenges

- Full operating expenses: As church and school operations continue to move toward normal levels, operating expenses are running closer to budget. This is a good thing! However, we will not likely have expense savings as a way to compensate for lower-than-budgeted revenue.
- Inflation: For various monetary policy and supply/demand reasons, inflation has resurfaced as a significant issue for the American economy. As Grace approaches budgeting season for fiscal 2022-2023, we anticipate needing to project considerably higher expenses.
- Seasonality of cash flows: We encourage everyone to consider if regular, electronic giving might be a good practical and spiritual approach to “first fruits” giving. We encourage our entire membership to engage and consider making regular gifts, no matter how large or small, and we encourage everyone to make a percentage increase to their giving, if possible.

Respectfully submitted,
Daniel Krout, Treasurer

Committee Members: Jade Augustine, Mike Carioscio, Erica Charles, Krista Schoenheider Kaplan (chair), Principal Bill Koehne (*ex officio*), Pastor Dave Lyle (*ex officio*), Jim McClanahan (*ex officio*).

The Personnel Committee met six times in 2021 (January, April, June, July, September, and November). Our committee maintains an agenda with topics and projects worked on throughout the course of the year. We review any new legislation that may have an impact on our payroll, benefits, or employee relations. In addition, any personnel matters which are reported to the committee by the *ex officio* staff members on the committee are added to the agenda to be discussed. Lastly, the committee proactively reviews a list of potential project items and prioritizes them against other open items.

The Grace Church & School Employee Handbook is reviewed on an annual basis. In 2021 we proposed minor Handbook revisions based on several policy updates. Those proposed revisions were approved by the Church Council, and the Handbook was revised accordingly.

In addition to the regular standing items, we have several other projects we are working on to improve our policies for our faculty and staff, and address employee matters and leader priorities. Some of the projects we worked on in 2021 are:

- Advice and assistance in the development and implementation of a comprehensive performance management and review program for non-pastoral, non-teaching staff.
- Advice and assistance in the review, update and implementation of the background check process for employees and certain volunteers.
- Preparation of a proposed updated Sabbatical Leave policy for called pastors and cantors.

Respectfully submitted: Krista Schoenheider Kaplan, Committee Chair

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Committee Members: Mary Margaret Bartley, Michael Gillespie, Sandy Lentz, Joel Lueking (Chairperson), Joe Modrich, Tom Swanson, Josh Wood, John Lattyak, Drew Niermann. Ex Officio: Rich Brooks Facilities Manager, Jim Mc Clanahan Business Office Administrator

2021 Target Issues

ONGOING ISSUES (NOT PRIORITIZED)

1. Looking to have woodwork throughout the facility stripped and refinished.
2. Landscaping management
3. Recycling/Composting initiative started
4. ComEd LED bulb rebate in process
5. Vendor certificates of insurance and performance evaluations
6. Started to replace fluorescent light fixtures with LED lights
7. Interior design task force has design and cost estimates for atrium, conference room and 1902 room.
8. All building alarm system being researched
9. Looking to install TV and begin cloud-based message scrolling in the atrium
10. Facilities use and fees policy development
11. Specialist evaluated stained glass – getting bid for cracked panes
12. Getting bids for additional tuckpointing on sanctuary exterior south wall.
13. Soumar masonry to repair the interior south wall when we find the cause of the damage.
14. Phone system – signed contract with Comcast coaxial and to switch elevator POTS lines for a net savings of \$2,400.00. Added AT & T fiber line as backup to Comcast.
15. Investigating replacing the organ and bell balcony lights with LED lights
16. Approved a bid from Red Star to replace exit lights with LEDs. Net cost will be \$3,365.00 after Com Ed rebate
17. Looking into a front desk notification system when someone exits from the church Bonnie Brae doors other than on Sunday mornings
18. New roof leaks discovered: 3rd floor common area, Dennen office ceiling, Massmann classroom, glass block landing ceiling, atrium ceiling, Pastor Lyle's office
19. We received a request from a property investor about selling Grace house.
20. Fire inspector suggested that standpipes be installed in the northeast stairwell
21. We have been requested to explore geothermal energy feasibility
22. A power surge damaged 3 roof top units and the FOB reader. We will need to get a new motor for one of the roof top units. We discussed the possibility of getting a surge protector for the entire facility

CLOSED ISSUES (NOT PRIORITIZED)

1. Solar panel project completed including ground level solar panel.
2. A canopy was erected outside of the Division Street entrance.
3. A portrait was done of Pastor Modahl
4. Tuckpointing repairs done on Memorial Garden, exterior south wall, library north wall, and sanctuary back balcony, bell choir balcony.
5. Additional ferns planted on the north side near Division Street door. Davy Tree fertilized and trimmed trees and treated the evergreens.
6. 2nd Floor Grace House apartment remodeled.
7. Rondelay art glass installed in atrium windows
8. Grace garden plaque installed
9. New Rose window light installed
10. Tile replaced carpet in the Senior and Junior kindergarten and Pre-school rooms
11. Can lights and exit sign lights replaced with LEDs.
12. Radon testing done and passed

13. Narthex pastors' plaque updated with Wegners and Pastor Medlin
14. Choir room floor retiled.

COVID-19 Mitigation 2020-2021

1. Purchased 2 electrostatic cleaners to aid in COVID-19 mitigation
2. Installed wall to divide the school library into two rooms to allow the school to return to in person learning.
3. Windows in kindergarten rooms, business office and Principal Koehne's office were modified to allow for fresh air inflow.
4. In line air purifiers installed to aid in COVID-19 mitigation.
5. Bought air quality detectors.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Swanson, Secretary

Members: Jade Augustine (Church Council, President), JR Reynolds (Endowment), Kate Hogenson (at-large appointed), Felicia Niermann (at-large appointed), David Lyle (Sr. Pastor), Michael Costello (Cantor), and Bill Koehne (Principal)

Non-Voting Attendee: Jim McClanahan (Business Director)

Responsibilities

The Grant Review Committee (the Committee) is responsible for implementing the guidelines of all funds entrusted to the Endowment Committee by a donor or by the church council that are earmarked by the donor, by the congregation, or by the church council to be for a restricted purpose that may require a review process to access a distribution. The Committee's review has primarily focused on two funds in 2021: Legacy of Grace Endowment Fund, and the Stauffer Music Fund.

Legacy of Grace Endowment Fund

The Legacy of Grace Endowment Fund (Legacy) was established in 2002 as an enduring thankoffering for blessings bestowed on the Grace community. Legacy is intended to support new or recurring expenditures or ministry programs that are not included in the congregation's current or prior fiscal year's operating budget.

Proposed projects must be related to one of the following stated purposes:

- Educational excellence
- New ministry at Grace or beyond
- Resources for congregational growth
- The support and extension of Grace's music ministry

The Legacy fund value at the end of Grace's fiscal 2021 year (June 30, 2021) was \$4,479,000. The amount of scheduled distributions in fiscal 2022 is \$158,000. The accumulated balance (unencumbered) in the Legacy custodial account as of December 31, 2021, is \$138,000.

Grants from Legacy in calendar year 2021 included:

- Pastor Lyle doctorate tuition
- Hoffman tuition
- Sanctuary / livestream sound system
- Technology Manager (new staff position sponsorship)
- Refugee ministry

To request a Legacy grant application form, call or e-mail church secretary Esther Armstrong (earmstong@gracriverforest.org). Submit Legacy applications to Felicia Niermann (felicianiermann@gmail.com) for consideration by the Grant Review Committee. Approved applications are forwarded to the Church Council for a vote and final approval.

Stauffer Music Fund

The Stauffer Music Fund (Stauffer) was established in 2008 to support the music ministry of the church. The Stauffer fund value at the end of Grace's fiscal 2021 year (June 30, 2021) was \$458,000. The amount of scheduled distributions in fiscal 2022 is \$15,144. The accumulated distribution balance (unencumbered) in the Stauffer custodial account as of December 31, 2021, is \$4,700.

Grants from Stauffer in calendar year 2021 included:

- Kontras Quartet Underwriting Support
- N95 Masks for church and school choirs
- Music teacher continuing education expense
- Yamaha C2 piano purchase for choir room
- Schalk Hymn Festival

Respectfully submitted,
Felicia Niermann

BALLOT

I VOTE "YES" FOR ALL CANDIDATES AS PRESENTED ON THIS BALLOT

OR

YES NO

Officers of the Congregation

| | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| President | John Bouman | 2 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Vice President | Beth Reynolds (1 year vacancy) | 1 year | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Treasurer | Dan Krout | 2 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Board of Spiritual Life

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Paulette Reddel (Council Rep) | 2 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mark Bouman | 3 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Daniel Lehmann | 3 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Board of Discipleship

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Tina Baird (1 year vacancy) | 1 year | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Laura Merwin | 3 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Stephanie Wilkening | 3 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Board of Finance and Property

| | | | |
|----------------|---------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Karen Brunssen | 3 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|----------------|---------|--------------------------|--------------------------|