

Annual Report 2022

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Congregation Meeting

January 29, 2023

Agenda

1. Opening prayer and devotion
2. Review/approval of minutes from June 2022 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. Announcements
8. Benediction

Congregation Statistics 2022

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Baptisms | 16 |
| Confirmations | 10 |
| New Members (adults and children) | 35 |
| Transfer Out | 8 |
| Released | 0 |
| Deaths | 11 |
| Grace membership – baptized | 1,196 |
| Grace membership – confirmed | 981 |

January 2023

Greetings --

Happy New Year! This is the time to gradually get back to normal after the holiday season. Whatever "normal" might be for you. I hope you had good family and friends time, whether at home or on the road, and a prolonged chance to remember and appreciate the meaning of Jesus' birth -- God's entry into human form and life and death and resurrection. Maybe you saw glimpses of that baby and his courageous young mom in the young people you spent time with at Christmas; or a hint of Simeon in the grandpas doting on little ones. Maybe you thought about that refugee Holy Family that had to flee to Egypt to escape the threat of government violence when you worked on or heard about Grace's fine project to welcome and support refugee families here in Chicago. Or maybe you detected a hint of an angel chorus in all of the wonderful music around Grace. It's good to know that when we get back to "normal", whatever that is, the music and effective preaching will be a part of it. "Normal" at Grace is a tremendous blessing.

As we enter a new calendar year, we also enter the second half of our fiscal year. On Sunday, January 29, after the 11:00 service, we will convene our annual congregational meeting. The agenda is below. Through word and music and sacraments we receive forgiveness and grace; we receive peace. Organizing and governing ourselves as a congregation is how we show our gratitude and make it active. We do this through our excellent Pastors and Principal and staff and also through our own leadership and participation and mutual solidarity.

At the meeting we will check in on our financial condition: in a phrase, it is better than last year but well below the aspirations in our budget. We will hear from our staff leaders about the status of the ministries and stewardship that they lead and that are enabled by our support and participation. And we will elect our new group of leaders for the Council and boards. Many thanks to everyone on that ballot (a copy provided with this letter) for agreeing to contribute their time and talent to our self-government as a congregation.

So it's back to "normal", which at Grace is as much a blessing as the festivals. See you on the 29th.

Peace,

John Bouman
President, Grace Lutheran Church

The Rev. David R. Lyle, Senior Pastor – 2022 Annual Report

“So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.” Isaiah 55:11

2022 was the year of returning. COVID-19 lingered but ceased to dominate our lives. We spoke of returning to normal. We wondered when more people will return to worship. We asked if we would ever return to how things were before the pandemic upended everything nearly three years ago.

There are lingering questions we can't answer and factors beyond our control as we wonder about returning. But when God speaks of returning, God does so with purpose and power. Through Isaiah, God speaks a word about the power of the Word. When the Word goes forth from God's mouth, it will return but it will not be empty. The Word succeeds in bringing God's promises and purposes to fruition.

As a result of God's Word, we have seen so many glimpses of God's goodness and grace during the past year. We were finally able to celebrate the 125th (now the 127th) anniversary of Grace School. Oktoberfest returned. The weekly rhythm of worship with more and more people in the pews was a constant reminder of God's faithfulness.

During the summer, we worshipped together at one service on Sunday morning instead of two, which many people found to be a wonderful shift. It created not only a fuller sanctuary but a deeper sense of connection and community. We will do the same this summer. The leadership of the congregation is still discussing the best worship schedule for Sundays during the school year. It may be that we move to a one-service schedule throughout the year, if it is prayerfully determined that this best suits our mission. We will continue to livestream our services, but my encouragement remains the same: Come to worship at Grace when you can. The ability to worship online is wonderful but it simply is not the same as being here. You miss out on receiving the sacrament; you miss out on connecting with fellow Christians. We miss out on *you!*

Our worship life bore witness to the faithfulness of God's promises throughout the year. We rejoiced with 16 new children of God, welcomed into God's grace through Holy Baptism. We celebrated with 10 young adults as their baptismal vows were affirmed in Confirmation. We welcomed 35 new members to our community. And we commended 11 members into God's unfailing hands, trusting that in dying, they have returned to God through the power of the Word which will not let them go.

2022 was a year of change in our staff. On the church side, we welcomed Julie Hinz (Discipleship and Fellowship Coordinator), Brendha Klaus (Communications Coordinator), Peter Modrich (Assistant Facilities Manager), Dave Pfeiffer (Facilities Manager), and Joanna Schubkegel (Parish Nurse). We also welcomed Eileen Maggio into a new role at the Reception Desk following her retirement as School Administrative Assistant. I am grateful to work with each of these gifted individuals, and our entire staff, as together we seek to serve God and God's people.

By the end of this school year, I will have completed my Doctor of Ministry at Candler School of Theology, following which I will embark on a sabbatical over the summer. I am grateful to the people of Grace for the support that makes such things possible. Your prayers, encouragement, and financial support are all greatly appreciated.

I also celebrate that we ended the fiscal year with a modest surplus and have reached the midpoint of this fiscal year with a surplus. Your generosity is both noted and appreciated; I know it will continue through the coming year. Your investments in the ministry we share reap returns that go far beyond the bottom line. Thank you!

I encourage you to read the reports collected here. They bear witness to the great and varied work that God has accomplished through each of you.

In the midst of challenges and uncertainty, God remains faithful. The Word is at work in the world and in our lives. It will not return to God empty. God's purposes will be achieved. We can trust this promise.

In the hope of Christ,

Dave Lyle
Senior Pastor

The Rev. Troy Medlin, Associate Pastor – 2022 Annual Report

“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with gratitude to be a part of this local manifestation of the body of Christ known as Grace. One of the gifts of 2022 was the opportunity to gather consistently, week in and week out, together, in-person, around word and song, meal, and community. Having been called here in the height of the pandemic I pray we will never tire of the simple wonder of coming together each Sunday morning to receive the gift of Jesus Christ. In word proclaimed, bread and wine received, and in his presence in each of you for the sake of our neighbors in need.

I also want to express my appreciation for all of the staff that make ministry such a gift in this place. Pastor Lyle and Pastor Costello are both such thoughtful and encouraging colleagues. What a blessing to share a partnership in the gospel with them both. I’m especially thankful for the close collaboration I share with Julie Modrich and all her dedicated work in faith formation, Sunday School, Confirmation, and beyond. Her gifts and skills are invaluable as we walk with children and youth as they live into the promises of their baptism.

The delightful duties of preaching Christ crucified and risen, presiding at the table and the font, and providing pastor care alongside Pastor Lyle and our parish nurse Joanna Schubkegel continue to be highlights of my call among you as associate pastor. These practices continue to call me back to the same ocean of mercy that I have the privilege of calling each of you back to week in and week out.

In this past year I have had the deep joy and honor of baptizing new-born children of God and proclaiming those same unconditional promises of life from death as beloved saints have completed their baptismal journey. I’ve also had the privilege of walking with one couple as they joined their lives in marriage.

Serving as the pastor to our high school youth continued to be inspiring this past year as well. Our youth at Grace are such witnesses to vibrant and dynamic faith in this time. It is an honor to walk alongside them. While we were disappointed that the ELCA Youth Gathering got canceled last summer we have already begun gathering a group for an Appalachian Service Project mission trip in summer 2023. That promises to be a memorable week of service and community. We continue to explore Sunday morning and other opportunities for connection and faith conversations. Faith formation of all ages enjoyed the chance to make lunches and collect breakfast items for Housing Forward and our neighbors served by them.

I count myself blessed to get to work with so many talented and faithful lay-leaders as well. Particularly all those who are on the Board of Discipleship and all the committees that roll up to that board. Each of these people and their committees are such powerful witnesses to the life of the baptized. They always endeavor *to serve all people following the example of Jesus and work for justice and peace in all the earth*. That is the joyful calling of each one of all who have been

baptized into Christ. I encourage you to check out all of their reports in this booklet and join all that God is up to among us.

It was another fulfilling year for both the Men of Grace small group and our young adult Theology on Tap group too. I also began serving as a volunteer chaplain for the Oak Park Police Department this year. This will allow me to be more present in and around our community and to serve in a meaningful way.

Finally, I look with hope towards this coming year. Filled with gratitude for each of you I cannot wait to see where our crucified and risen savior will lead his body in 2023. Wherever that is I know he will meet us from that future with arms outstretched and life beyond anything we could create on our own. We will continue to become who we receive, the body of Christ. Thanks be to God!

With you on the journey,
Pastor Troy E. Medlin

Grace Lutheran School – 2022 Annual Report

Bill Koehne, Principal

God blessed Grace Lutheran School and our students in many ways in 2022 as we continue to live out our mission of *preparing children for a life of discipleship by helping them to grow in faith, knowledge, and character.*

During the 2021-22 school year, we made some adjustments in our approach to teaching math and reading. In math, we allowed our most advanced students to move up a grade level for math class, allowing us to better meet their needs. This move helped all of our students as teachers didn't have as wide a range to teach and could therefore give more support to our on-level and approaching level students. Our teachers in Grades K-5 received several hours of professional development on an approach called Guided Reading. In August our teachers began this method of teaching reading which allows us to more easily differentiate instruction. Finally, we added IXL, a software program that has allowed us to individualize learning for our students in both math and reading in Grades K-8. Standardized test scores in May of 2022 showed great improvement across the board in math. We look forward to this coming spring to see what the data shows regarding our new approach to reading instruction.

A recent trend of attracting more families and students who do not have a church home has continued. With that comes a great opportunity to teach the good news of Jesus' saving love. In 2022, six students, three each from two different families, were baptized at Grace in addition to their families becoming members of the congregation.

In May we celebrated with Eileen Maggio as she retired after 19 years as our school administrative assistant. Thank you, Eileen, for your dedication to our students and teachers.

The committee for the *Forward in Faith* campaign to create an endowment for the school wrapped up its work in December. As of the end of 2022, the endowment has received \$1.7M in one-time gifts and pledges. Almost 900K of that has already been collected. A huge thank you goes out to all those who gave countless hours of their time working on the campaign, and to all who have contributed financially to the effort. This endowment will provide ongoing financial support for the school: allowing for instruction to remain cutting edge, providing competitive salaries in order to attract and retain high quality teachers, and supporting families through financial assistance.

In September, with the help of the Forward in Faith committee, Julie Modrich, Julie Hinz, Joanna Serpico, and many others, we finally celebrated the 125th + Anniversary of the school. We welcomed over 50 graduates along with many congregation members and current school families to Grace for a wonderful festival service followed by lunch and fellowship.

Enrollment is up 4% this year with 200 enrolled for the 2022-23 school year. As of January 15, we already have 35 applicants for next school year, much higher than other years on this date.

Thank you to Grace Lutheran Church for your continuous support of Grace Lutheran School!

Ministry of Music – 2022 Annual Report
Pastor Michael D. Costello, Grace Cantor

And may God give us faith to sing always: Alleluia! – Fred Pratt Green

In the midst of trying times the people of Grace have always found a way to sing. During some of the most difficult challenges and always through our greatest joys we have found a song on our lips, glorifying God for all the gifts and benefits we have received from his generous goodness. Throughout the pandemic our song went on, although we sang from our homes and workplaces as we worshipped through digital media. But the alleluias seem to be getting clearer and louder once again as more and more people gather in person for worship. As the body of Christ, we sing our alleluias best when we worship in one place and with one voice.

The ministry of music at Grace has mostly returned to normalcy, with both school and church choirs rehearsing on their traditional schedules and with masks now being optional for all who participate. The Parish Choir has continued to sing every Sunday morning, for festival services, the monthly Bach Cantata Vespers services, and our annual Advent/Christmas Concert. The choirs of Grace School are also back to their complete schedule of participating in Sunday morning services, midweek Advent and Lent services, the Advent/Christmas Concert in December, and recently sang for our beloved children’s services of Lessons and Carols on Christmas Eve. 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 also thankful for Johanna Johnson, our music teacher at Grace School, and Daniel Johnson, who is now conducting our handbell ensembles after Lisa Wolfanger’s faithful service to Grace in that capacity. Johanna and Daniel have both been extremely faithful and valuable members of our staff. Johanna continues our fine tradition of choral singing and music education in Grace School and Daniel has learned a great number of new skills to work with our Jr. High students. It is a joy to be in ministry with them daily. Finally, thanks to Gwen Gotsch, who has decided that part of her retirement from Grace should include reviving our Women’s Choir and giving people an opportunity to add their voices to the song.

May we continue to give thanks to the Lord, to sing and offer our gifts to the glory of God, “and may God give us faith to sing *always*: Alleluia!”

Grace and Peace,



Pastor Michael D. Costello, Grace Cantor

Office of Administration and Finance – 2022 Annual Report

The Office of Administration and Finance welcomed two new staff members in 2022 – Dave Pfeiffer joined us in February as the Facilities Manager, with Rich Brooks relocating to Minnesota; and Peter Modrich in February as Facilities Assistant, with Jay DeVries accepting a position at Walther. The rest of us remained the same - Jim McClanahan as Director, Cecelia Thornton as Assistant, and Jose Meza as Technology Manager.

The Office's primary goal is to meet your needs and expectations - our members, parents, students, staff and guests 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:

- 2022-23 - In June, the congregation approved Grace's 2022-23 budget of \$3,534,400 (0.16% increase from 2021-22).
 - At the half-way point, we are running a \$43,000 surplus.
- 2021-22 - At the January 2023 Congregational Meeting, the congregation is receiving the unaudited 2021-22 financial statements.
 - Church and school revenue were under budget, but church and school operating expenses were also under budget, resulting in an operating *surplus* for the year. However, the stock market was not kind to the endowment fund, resulting in an overall deficit for the year.
- 2020-21 – the financial statement audit was completed, as is required by Grace policy every three years. The audit resulted in no changes to the previously distributed unaudited numbers.

As to facilities:

- In October, we replaced five of Grace's nine roof-top HVAC units. The old units were over 20 years old. In addition to reducing maintenance costs, the new units will be more efficient.
- Grace's solar panels installed in January 2020, generated 7% of our electricity needs in 2022 (12.5% last year). The percentage declined because the panels did not fully operate from July through December, due to supply chain issues with a defective part. On a brighter note, our electricity consumption continued to decline, by 9% in 2022 (15.8% 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 continue to enhance Grace's network, internet, and audit/video.

On the human resources side, with the Personnel Committee and Church Council, we continue to 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 – 2022 Annual Report

Brendha Klaus, Communications Coordinator

As a new staff member at Grace Church, I look at the past year with gratitude for this community which welcomed me so kindly since my start in August 2022. Since then, our email communications continue to be a strong bridge between Grace and 3172 contacts who range from church members and friends to school families. Consistently, 61% of them open and engage with our emails. For context, the average rate at which Americans opened emails from non-profit organizations in 2022 was 25.17% according to Mailchimp statistics. I am glad to continue to use our available channels to foster this outstanding engagement between the church and its people.

Sunday is Coming emails are a huge part of that. Since fall, they have changed in format, now including a link to the Weekly Announcements to be accessed directly on the website, in addition to the usual livestream links as well as information about services and events happening between each Thursday and Sunday.

Most of the content found on Sunday is Coming emails (and much more) is featured on our church website as well. Managing a website, by the way, is a skill I learned at Grace. At this point, making updates, writing articles and uploading content to it has become a part of my routine.

Working on Grace Notes, our monthly newsletter, has also been both a pleasure and a challenge. I am joined at each issue as the team continues to work together to submit interesting stories, review content together and gather to coordinate mailing details. It is usually through Grace Notes that I meet the people of Grace. At each issue, I am grateful for your participation, your feedback, **and** your patience, when needed -- this is a gracious place to be.

In the new year, we have high hopes for the continuation and improvement of our old and well-established projects, but new things can also be achieved. So far, a few members in positions of leadership at our church have kindly contributed to our “stock” of virtual assets (video, writing and digital art) which are to be used in social media for optimized community outreach. As we move forward, we hope to occupy the digital sphere and share God’s love also online, and we count on our leaders for that.

On a personal level, this year also brings me the hope to become more inclusive by furthering my studies in American Sign Language. Our church and school both make great efforts to be accessible, and I hope to contribute to that mission in 2023.

With a thankful heart, it is my hope to grow professionally in this place and connect to more of God’s people in my first full year as a Grace staff member.

Board of Discipleship – Annual Report 2022

Committee Members:

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

2022 was a fruitful year for the committees housed within the Board of Discipleship. You will read more about the individual accomplishments within this report.

Specifically, we were blessed to be a part of a cross-committee partnership, led by the Justice and Peace group, to research and identify important racial equity educational opportunities for Grace leadership. Looking forward to 2023, this Board will work alongside the Justice and Peace Committee as they form a baseline and action plans for our leadership and greater congregation. This year we have been happy to have Julie Hinz join our monthly update meetings to provide insight into other Church happenings as we work to continue cross-pollinating ideas and community-building opportunities. Thank you, Julie!

As 2023 gets underway, we hope for continued protection against COVID so our committees and their members can continue to join for fellowship and good work within God's creation.

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! If you have interest in any committee, please feel free to reach out to me for a conversation or contact information at ryanbalock@yahoo.com or 630-202-6095.

I also want to call out a change in representation on the Board of Discipleship with Scott Street moving to represent the Benevolence Committee and Jessica Bullock taking Scott's vacated seat on the EEC.

Respectfully submitted,

Ryan Balock

Chairperson, Board of Discipleship

Children and Family Ministry - 2022 Annual Report

During this past year Children and Family Ministry has continued to focus on helping students explore faith and Christian living in partnership with other ministries of Grace Church. Challenges continue with finding volunteers to implement Faith Formation programs.

Faith Formation instruction highlights

- **Sunday School through May 2022.** We returned in person in October 2021. Our numbers were smaller than before Covid, but continued to grow as the year progressed.
- **Sunday School (age 3 to 6th grade)** enrolled 12 preschool through kindergarten and 48 first through sixth grade children who participate in person on Sunday mornings.
- **Confirmation.** Eleven ninth-graders were confirmed in October. We currently have thirteen confirmands in our eighth grade class and eleven in seventh grade. Confirmation instruction is led by Pastor Lyle and Pastor Troy.
- **Mentor Ministry** currently is led by Linda and Scott Street. Mentors and 2022 confirmands met through September of 2022 before affirming their faith. Another amazing group of 8th graders and mentors were connected this fall. We are excited to walk with them on their faith journey.
- **Ministry Fair and Advent activities** held on November 20, 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 center of the gym, all were welcome to created advent devotional activities for the home.
- **Combined church and school events**
 - Friday Night Sock Hop - April 22, 140 in attendance*
 - A DJ spun rock and roll oldies
 - Fun with hula hoops, dancing, games and contests.
 - Dinner includes drive-in favorites like sliders, crinkle fries, root beer floats and Jello.
 - The Harvest Festival, about 120 people in attendance*
 - Glitter jar craft
 - Scooter fun and more in the gym
 - Hot dogs, cheeseburgers, mac n cheese, roasted sweet potatoes, salad, beer and cider, seltzer and caramel apple bar.
 - Middle School Christmas Party, about 50 5-8 graders in attendance at Grace*
 - Gathered for Christmas cheer
 - pizza
 - open gym
 - gift exchange
- **Communion Retreat.** Six fourth graders and their parents attended the one-evening retreat on March 4 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 gathered 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, lunches packed for The Night Ministry twice and a Pentecost project for clients of Housing Forward. Together in Christ,

Julie Modrich, Children's Ministry Coordinator

Elementary Education Committee – 2022 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 2022 the board did the following:

Funding

- Bill and James participated in a Grace Endowment Committee, which completed the active phase of a three-year fundraising campaign for a school endowment, which will help ensure the financial sustainability of the school. The Endowment Committee facilitated over 13 cottage meetings so far with Grace School parents, alumni, and Grace Church members and has raised roughly \$1.8 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 Ed Mason, a former Grace Parent and former E.E.C. chairperson to rejoin the E.E.C.

Administration

- Started to develop a job description for a new part-time assistant principal position with the guidance of Bill, the personnel committee, and Pastor Lyle.
- surveyed teachers and evaluated the principal.
- dealt with personnel issues and concerns, as well as hiring decisions.

Marketing

- The EEC hired Ana Garcia as the first full-time enrollment/marketing person for Grace School.
- helped host the donut-making and sales for the Oak Park Farmer's Market.
- Helped facilitate a Grace Fan Club meeting.

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 – 2022 Annual Report

Committee Members: Ted Anton, Chair, Troy Medlin, pastoral representative, Dan Cattau, Jim Kerns, Hannah Langhoff, and Laura Merwin, Board of Discipleship representative.

In general, we schedule sessions that correspond to seasonal and societal topics, with feedback from the congregation, generally scripturally-based, and pay a great deal of attention to drawing quality speakers. Our sessions can be attended in person in the Seminar Room or via Zoom. We would love to get a bigger screen for slides in the Seminar Room, and occasionally the Zoom audience was not able to see speaker slides. We think that problem has been resolved.

Between January and June 2022, we hosted ten sessions. The year started with Wheaton College political scientist Tracy McKenzie speaking on religion and American history, followed by Garrett Seminary theologian Anna Johnson covering how Luther's friends shaped his thought, and then University of Chicago's William Schweicker on ways to bridge the red-blue divide in our country. Next was DePaul University scholar William Cavanaugh describing ways to address rampant Western consumerism. The remaining sessions included the February Grace homilist Peter Pettit speaking on Lutheran and Jewish relations, DePaul University philosopher Jason Hill on immigration, race and his faith journey. Our own Jim Kerns lectured on the neuroscience of empathy, followed by Wheaton College's Michael Graves speaking on early Christian leadership in North Africa. In May, Lutheran School of Theology's Ben Stewart lectured on natural burial, and Grace youth Charlotte Meyer gave a round-up of her trip to the Glasgow climate conference.

Between September and December, we hosted seven more sessions. These included Pastor Troy on the catechumenate and Elmhurst Seminary's Nancy Lee on "Lamentations," the subject of her recent book. BBC Radio's David Cook spoke in-person and by Zoom for two sessions on Roe v. Wade. Northwestern University scholar Christine Helmer talked Reformation Sunday about "Whose Luther?" the subject of her book. This was followed by a panel from Interfaith Green Network on Green Religion and then *Christian Century* editor Elizabeth Palmer on the best books of 2022.

In our programming, we placed special emphasis on the topics of justice and ethics; we plan to continue this effort in next year's programming. Our audience for the year numbered about 310 attending. We anticipate a full slate of speakers for 2023, again delivered both in person and Zoom. We very much wish to recruit new committee member.

Respectfully submitted,
Ted Anton, Chair
My email: tanton@depaul.edu

January 16, 2023

Benevolence Committee - 2022 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.
- **Grace Lutheran connection.** The level of connection (e.g. member volunteers) with Grace Lutheran Church was considered.
- **Responsiveness.** The level of responsiveness, including providing periodic updates and a yearly report 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.
- **Justice and peace priority.** Another factor was the commitment of the organization to justice and peace initiatives.

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

There is \$182,575.00 designated for the Benevolence distribution in the current fiscal year. On the next page you will find a list of benevolence ministries that were funded.

Thank you,

Jessica Bullock
Chair
Benevolence Committee

Ministry

A House in Austin

Appalachia Service Project

Beyond Hunger (OPRF Food Pantry)

Cabrini Green Legal Aid Clinic

Center for Christian Education

Concordia University

Consistory of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lithuania

Cornerstone Academy

ELCA Global Missions

ELCA Metropolitan Chicago Synod

ELCA World Hunger

ELCA- International Women Leaders

Harmony Community Church of Chicago Food Pantry

Hope for Grieving Children - Africa

Housing Forward

Kidz Express

Lawndale Christian Legal Center

Lutheran Child & Family Services of Illinois (LCFS)

Lutheran Disaster Response

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

Lutheran School of Theology Chicago

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

New Moms

Norwood Senior Care (Bethesda Rehab & Senior Care)

Pangea Educational Development Group

RefugeeOne

Serving People with a Mission

The Night Ministry

Uniting Voices Chicago (formerly Chicago Children's Choir)

Valparaiso University

Walther Christian Academy

Young Adults in Global Mission

Justice and Peace Committee – 2022 Annual Report

Dear friends in Christ,

The work of the Justice and Peace Committee continued in 2022 with a mix of externally directed actions and intense inward reflection. Since the George Floyd murder in 2020, the Grace congregation and school have been committed to addressing the sin of racism in all its forms, wherever it occurs. The Black Voices at Grace sessions and the other activities the congregation has undertaken over the past two years have led to the beginnings of partnerships with the Lawndale Christian Legal Center (LCLC) and other organizations, and to the continued raising of awareness of the challenges we face as a congregation and a community. We remain hopeful, but as long as sin abounds in this world, our work will not end.

In April, a group from the committee visited the construction site for a new facility for the non-profit BUILD organization in the Austin community on Chicago's West Side. BUILD serves more than 2,500 young people each year, giving them a safe space to meet for educational, recreational, and counseling activities. We were joined by Cliff Nellis from LCLC and had a fruitful discussion on their plans to partner with BUILD on the restorative justice work LCLC is doing. Committee members in attendance were impressed with the mission of BUILD and its success in forming collaborative relationships with the Chicago police department, as well as with educational and other organizations in the Austin neighborhood.

As a result of this visit, and after consideration of the merits of other worthy organizations, Justice and Peace recommended to the Benevolence Committee that \$24,000 from the Kingdom Frontiers fund be given to BUILD to support its new restorative justice program. This proposal was approved by Benevolence and the funds will be disbursed.

The Benevolence Committee also asked Justice and Peace for input on revising the criteria for the selection of organizations to receive Grace Benevolence funds. We submitted changes to focus on organizations that commit to address underserved communities and actively support these communities with human and financial resources. The Justice and Peace criteria comprise 15% of the weighting used in the selection of Benevolence organizations.

In partnership with the Grace Social Ministry Committee, a drive was held in May to collect appropriate clothing for LCLC clients to wear when appearing in court. We thank the congregation for its extreme generosity in the amount and quality of clothes donated. LCLC has already put these clothes to good use.

The committee spent several months in intense discussions and planning for the upcoming retreat for Grace leaders in February 2023. The retreat is titled "Grace - One Body in Christ: Becoming a more inclusive community together." We have been guided by Rev. Sunitha Mortha, Associate to the Bishop and Director of Diversity, Equity, and Belonging for the Metro Chicago Synod of the ELCA. Pr. Sunitha will facilitate the retreat, which will include members of the Clergy, Staff, Grace Council, Boards, and Committees as well as representatives from Grace School. Black Voices at Grace asked our members of color to be vulnerable and tell their stories. This retreat will provide the opportunity for members of the church leadership to tell their stories, trusting

that the Holy Spirit will guide the conversation and open up new ways of thinking about how Grace can become a more just and inclusive community of faith – truly One Body in Christ. I am writing this report on January 16, the day our country has chosen to honor the life and work of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. I have been reflecting on one of Dr. King’s most famous quotes: “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” This quote is often used in a hopeful context, but it contains within it an implicit warning: the arc of the universe does not bend itself. There are those – racists, white supremacists, anti-Semites, haters of Muslims and other religious minorities, and those who would deny women and members of the LGBT+ community their full rights as human beings – who are working every day to bend history toward cruelty, injustice, and oppression. It is our duty as Christians to work even harder every day for justice. Jesus gave us the commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves, and the Holy Spirit gives us the power to do so.

I thank God for those at Grace who work tirelessly at Harmony Community Church and other organizations, who give of their legal, medical, and other talents to ensure that the less fortunate are cared for, and for all the justice work, known and unknown, this congregation engages in. I also thank God for the passion and commitment of the members who served on the Justice and Peace Committee during 2022: Pat Anderson, Karin Danganan, Sue Foran, Larry Garber, Case Hoogendoorn, Ruth Hughes-McElravey, Glenn Johnson, Sabrina Maggio, Dick Martens, Miriam Moore, Mary Paulson, Harriet Roberts, Stephanie Wilkening, Julie Hinz, our staff liaison, and Rev. Troy Medlin, our pastoral representative. This congregation is exceptionally blessed.

Respectfully submitted,
Lance Wilkening
Justice and Peace Committee Chair

Library Committee – 2022 Annual Report

Committee Members:

Linda Street

Olinda Fink

Carolyn Garber

Marilyn Fall

Pastor Troy Medlin – Resource

Ryan Balock – Board of Discipleship representative

The library continues to be a welcoming space on Sunday mornings – with coffee available and a cozy chair for all. The GriefShare group found the church library to be an intimate venue for quiet, personal sharing dealing with tender topics. The Cornerstones fellowship makes regular use of the space on Wednesday mornings as well. 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.

And besides that – we have books, CDs and videos to check out! Yes, we are a lending library with a diverse collection on all sorts of topics; plus fiction and children’s books. Best advice – browse the shelves while sipping your coffee on Sunday morning. Check out a book that jumps out at you.

The seasonal collection of books in the atrium display case has evolved to provide a shared experience with other church committee groups. Please contact any member of the committee to arrange this space for your group. Books available in the library related to the work of your specific committee can be displayed along with other materials sharing the work of your group. Religion and Literature books are regularly ordered so there are at least two copies of each selected text available for ALL Grace members who wish to join in the discussions or to just read the books for their own pleasure. Several other new books have been ordered on the recommendation of Grace readers. We are always open to suggestions regarding new books.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Street, Library Committee Chair

Social Ministry Committee – 2022 Annual Report

Committee Members: Rebecca Dahlstrom, Jo-Ellyn Dorsey, Heidi Hamernik (co-chair), Julie Hinz (staff liaison), Glenn Johnson, Loretta Lattyak, Pastor Troy Medlin (ex officio), Ellie Schnack, Lance Wilkening, Stephanie Wilkening (co-chair)

The Social Ministry Committee's mission is to raise awareness about people in need and offer opportunities for hands-on service. This year we continued to sponsor a variety of initiatives for many community organizations. We can't thank the congregation enough for its generous support.

The following is a description of the work performed and sponsored by the SMC in 2022.

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.

Housing Forward Meals

Throughout the year a group from the congregation and community continues to collect funds internally, purchase prepared meals from a local grocer, and deliver monthly meals to Housing Forward's transitional housing center in Oak Park.

Meals for the Night Ministry

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

Mitten Tree

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

Diaper and Toilet Paper Drive

This spring the committee collected diapers for New Moms in Chicago's Austin community and toilet paper for the Harmony and Forest Park food pantries. We collected more than 1,000 diapers and more than 350 rolls of toilet paper.

Clothes Collection

In partnership with the Justice and Peace Committee we collected court clothes for the Lawndale Christian Legal Center in Chicago. The center provides a holistic approach to keeping young people out of the prison system.

Evie Tiemann Memorial School Supply Drive

This year, we named our annual school supply drive in memory of our beloved committee member and passionate educator Evie Tiemann, who passed away in 2022. We 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. Harmony Community Cares Tutoring Program also received some of the collected supplies for the children it serves in Chicago's North Lawndale Community. The refugee families supported by Grace also put some of the supplies to use this school year.

Coat Drive

We collected children's and adults' winter coats, which were distributed to those in need by Harmony Food Pantry and the Salvation Army, both in Chicago.

Christmas Giving

We collected almost \$3,000 in 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 \$750 in donations to Lutheran Child and Family Services' Christmas drive for children served by LCFS. This year, in collaboration with Grace School, as part of our Adopt-a-Stocking program for the Night Ministry, 150 stockings were made and filled with toiletry and sundry items.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Hamernik and Stephanie Wilkening,

Co-Chairs

Board of Spiritual Life – 2022 Annual Report

The Board of Spiritual Life (the “board”) is composed of elected congregation members who are referred to as elders. Those serving during 2022 were Mark Bouman, Amy Claud, Jeff Cribbs, Dan Lehmann, Lori Martin, Paulette Reddel, and Valerie Stefanic.

The board is charged with providing for the proclamation of the Word and celebration of the sacraments; attending to the spiritual needs of the congregation; enhancing the worship life of the congregation; fostering fellowship within the congregation; and 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 2022 and continuing into 2023 at Grace include the following:

- Worked with pastors, cantor, church staff and members as the congregation returned to full-time worship. Attendance became an issue as worship participation did not return to pre-pandemic levels. As a result elders determined along with our pastors a single Sunday service during the summer would best serve the congregation, and Church Council agreed. Grace returned in the fall to two worship services on Sundays.

- Elders continue to review worship attendance as well as voluntary member participation in various rolls related to worship (i.e., Altar Guild, ushers, greeters, etc.). In person worship is still well below pre-Covid levels. The board will evaluate this trend and issues contributing to it during the course of 2023 with a goal determining the number and time of worship services that would best serve the congregation going forward.

- Elders unanimously endorsed a sabbatical for Pastor David Lyle, and Church Council approved, to take place in the summer of 2023. Elders are working to provide for pastor’s absence during the sabbatical.

- Elders assist in leading in-person worship in our role as deacons (tending the communion “table”) and visit and serve communion to members of the congregation who are home-bound or in care facilities. This is done in conjunction with the pastors and Stephen Ministry members.

- Elders look forward to continuing work with new staff member Julie Hinz, coordinator of discipleship and fellowship, through the various committees that link in with the Board of Spiritual Life.

- Elders serve as liaisons to the Grace committees tied to the board 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 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 recognize and acknowledge each month by written personal notes the service of those parishioners who make special contributions to the life of Grace and to the success of Grace's mission. We also write personal notes of encouragement to confirmands upon their public witness and confirmation.

We acknowledge and thank elders Lori Martin and Paulette Reddel who agreed to serve, if elected at the January 2023 congregation meeting, to another three-year term on the Board of Spiritual Life.

Respectfully submitted,
Dan Lehmann, board chair
January 2023

Altar Guild – 2022 Annual Report

The Grace Church and School Altar Guild has moved ahead with the congregation's return to full communion participation practices. Individual cup trays, with wine and grape juice, and common cup wine are now available for all communion services. The presiding minister also now shares a full chalice at the movable altar after blessing the elements. Gift bearers carry a flagon and ciborium to the altar. Gluten free host continues to be offered in individual paper cups to reduce the risk of cross contamination with the regular wheat host.

Altar Guild has adjusted to a modified Ministry Scheduler Pro program for signing up and substituting dates for communion services set up and clean up. A "Refresher/Training" gathering was held in October 2022 to introduce new Altar Guild members and clarify protocol details as communion services return to "normal" procedures.

Altar Guild is blessed with dedicated and congenial servants who faithfully provide the essential "setting the table" for communion at Grace. We prayerfully continue to encourage interested Grace members, individuals, couples, friends, youth and family groups, to consider joining this most rewarding and "behind the scenes" ministry for Grace Church and School and all who commune with us at Grace.

"Come, for all is now ready!"

Roberta Gillespie, Grace Altar Guild

Worship Committee Report - 2022 Annual Report

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

Non-voting member: Pastor Michael Costello

Board of Spiritual Life liaison: Mark Bouman

The Worship Committee is charged with providing guidance regarding Grace's worship life, providing lay perspective to the pastors and cantor, and being a conduit for Grace members to express their thoughts regarding worship.

The Worship Committee also assists the various groups who support worship at Grace: Altar Guild, Chancel Guild, Statuary Committee, Ushers, and Audio/Visual.

Perhaps you are wondering what exactly does the Worship Committee do? While on the Worship Committee these last eight years, listed here are a number of actions that were completed or are ongoing.

- Proposed plaques which list the pastors and cantors over the years
- Established a worship coordinator
- Had choir texts printed in the bulletin
- Found volunteers to wash the lector robes
- Had a new Advent Wreath made
- Approved the use of homemade bread for communion
- Wrote, and later revised, duty lists for lectors, deacons, and assisting ministers
- Purchased a new banner pole
- Had extraneous items removed from the sanctuary
- Set up the Statuary Task Force
- Approved repairs to the funeral pall and altar cloth by the Altar Guild
- Helped select a new altar cloth which was a donation
- Proposed the composition of a sung baptismal hymn
- Wrote an article for Grace Notes regarding the prelude/postlude
- Approved the documentation of scheduling forms by the worship coordinator
- Added new volunteers to worship groups
- Decorated the sanctuary yearly for Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, and Thanksgiving
- Decorated the chancel for the video-taping of the Children's Christmas Eve Service in 2020
- Provided monies for the refurbishing or purchase of various sacramental vessels
- Pens and penholders installed in the sanctuary

- Approved a new, deeper receptacle for unused sacramental bread to be dug in the prayer garden
- A third camera for live-streamed services was installed.
- The process of conserving the Altar Cloth, tatted by Bob Busse, was completed.
- Provided for the purchase of Peace Lillies for the chancel
- Provided for the purchase of two more communion trays.
- Participated in Ministry Fairs
- Expanded use of new hymn resources are being utilized in worship services
- A new sound system for in-person and livestream services was installed
- Requested the library committee to purchase the book “Occasional Services”
- Reviewing different rites for Confession and Forgiveness
- Reading and discussing the ELCA document “The Use of the Means of Grace”

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 enhance 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 - 2022 Annual Report

Committee Members: Joanna Schubkegel (Parish Nurse) Bryan Bernard, Margret Burke, Karen Eckstein, Loretta Lattyak, Cindy Rohlfing, Leslie Sleuwen, Nancy Wohlford, Val Spiller, Patty Engebretson

Parish Nurse Ministry: I began my ministry as the Parish Nurse in July 2022.

- Continuing education: I completed a Faith Community Nursing Program through University of Southern Indiana; I also became a Healthcare provider CPR certified. I attended a two-day training on End of Life planning called “Respecting Choices; a First Steps facilitator.” I also attend monthly Faith Community Nurse Network meetings and educational opportunities. I attended a church mental health summit and attended sessions on a wide variety of topics.
- Regular meetings: I attend weekly staff meetings, weekly pastoral care meetings, weekly Cornerstones, health committee meetings (monthly), Finding Hope (monthly) and the knitting group.
- Care of the congregation: I regularly visit members in their homes and care facilities, as well as frequent phone conversations and email exchanges. Visits with members can include assessments, support and active listening, education, emotional and spiritual support, and serving as an advocate. I also accompany members to doctors’ appointments, providing transportation, support, advocacy and reteaching after appointments.
- I began a birthday card ministry, sending cards to members whom I visit or communicate with.
- Monthly AED maintenance and first aid kit maintenance.
- I (along with Pastor Troy) lead the emergency preparedness committee. We audit emergency flip charts, revising the posted plans, plan staff training, and research emergency notification systems. Troy and I lead these committee meetings two times per year.
- I wrote a Grace Notes submission with plans to submit more in the future

Ministry Fair: We participated in the church ministry fair and recruited a new member, Patty Engebretson.

Anointing: Anointing (on the first Sunday of the month) resumed in September.

Health Promotion: I created a Faculty and Staff Wellness Challenge to encourage healthy habit building. Each week of the challenge focuses on different health related goals or habit and its connection to body, mind and spirit wellness.

Vaccine Clinic: We hosted an annual vaccine clinic on September 25th. The vaccines were administered by an Osco pharmacist and a pharmacy student. Vaccines offered included the updated bi-valent covid vaccine, seasonal flu, pneumonia, and shingles. This clinic had advanced registration but also accommodated walk-ins. One hundred and forty vaccines were administered to eight-one participants. There was a mix of church members and school families.

Prayer Shawls: In September the new prayer shawls were blessed and prayer shawls are continuously distributed.

New Members Committee – 2022 Annual Report

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

The mission of the committee is to help welcome and orient new members to Grace Lutheran Church. The committee members support 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 around 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 integrate new members into congregational life. This year we added a casual dinner to help facilitate these relationships.

Our spring new member class was our largest in recent history with a total of 24 participants. Our fall class welcomed 10 new members.

The committee attends all new member sessions, meets in person as needed, but does the majority of its work over email and text.

The committee has a budget of \$300/year. During '21-'22, we overspent by \$310 due to the purchase of new books for our class. We have only spent \$231 of our \$300 so far this fiscal year.

We are thankful that God continues to bring wonderful new members to Grace. The energy and experience they bring to our congregation is a blessing indeed.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Claud

Stewardship Committee – 2022 Annual Report

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

In early 2022 Eric Isenberg and Randy Keller both ended their terms.

In September we welcomed two new members: Justin Hartung and Michael Starrick

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

Faith Promise Sunday was observed on February 27. During the month leading up to Faith Promise Sunday, the Stewardship committee sent several communications to the congregation reminding them that a Faith Promise is a pledge of financial support for Grace Church — a commitment to support the mission and ministry here at Grace.

In anticipation of the end of the fiscal year, a Stewardship article in the May Grace Notes focused on the many blessings we have shared as members of Grace and how the ministry and mission of our church is making a difference in the lives of so many people in our community and our world. We emphasized the upcoming end of the fiscal year and asked members to consider an extra gift to Grace.

In June, Stewardship communications included end-of-year emails to the congregation plus individual emails to thank members for their generous giving throughout the year and to ask them to consider an extra gift to Grace.

In November, Stewardship participated in the Ministry Fair, conversing with Grace members about the ways they give of their time and talents. A Thankoffering letter was mailed to the congregation that reminded members that through the work and ministry of Grace Church, they engage in the important work to serve our neighbors, care for creation and seek justice and peace in the world.

Total Thankoffering gifts: \$11,000

Giving statements were sent in May and October.

Respectfully submitted by Candice Hill Buchbinder, Stewardship Committee Chair

Evangelism Committee – 2022 Annual Report

Committee Members: Julie Hinz, Ed Mason, Paulette Reddel, Linda Street, Scott Street, Katharine Roller, Chair

In September 2021, the Evangelism Committee was established to encourage the people of Grace to bring our faith into the community, and bring members of the community into Grace. After some time getting our feet under us, the group completed a number of successful projects in 2022 and looks forward to expanding our slate of activities in 2023. In June, in light of Julie Hinz's new role as Coordinator of Discipleship and Fellowship, Katharine Roller assumed the Chairship of the Committee.

Evangelism, in today's terms, is different than the traditional evangelism of the past. Our focus is 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.

Welcoming Visitors

In 2022, the Evangelism Committee embarked on a comprehensive assessment of the signage in Grace Church and School, aimed at making our physical space more welcoming, particularly for visitors. The Committee completed the assessment, drafted a signage update plan, and referred the plan to the Property Committee in August for the actual physical replacement of signage. Making Grace more welcoming to visitors also inspired the Committee to reinstate the Greeter Ministry, which had been placed on hold during the pandemic, recruiting volunteers to greet and guide those who attend Sunday worship services.

Encouraging Members to Share Their Faith

The Evangelism Committee also instigated and supported projects to encourage members of the Grace community to share their faith with one another, through service and fellowship. Julie Hinz conceived of the idea for the Grace Ministry Book while serving as Chair of the Committee, and Committee members assisted in gathering and compiling the information therein, and in the creation of the book itself, which is now an invaluable resource for the community as members seek the right fit for their talents. Members of the Committee also supported the Ministry Fair, which drew an excellent turnout and encouraged the people of Grace to put their skills to use in new ways. Finally, the Committee took responsibility for serving Lent and Advent Suppers where the community could gather before midweek worship and share a meal.

Christmas Evangelism

Christmas provides a special opportunity to share the good news of Christ with the world. Building on 2021's successful Christmas caroling project, the Evangelism Committee embarked on a new project sharing words of hope with our incarcerated siblings in Christ, and expanded the Christmas caroling opportunities from one to two.

The Words of Hope project, a collaboration with Just Detention International, took place after worship in late October. Between services, attendees were invited to write a card (or

two, or more) to incarcerated survivors of sexual violence, reminding them of God's love and sharing words of encouragement. JDI then collected the cards and shared them with grateful recipients in federal and state prisons across the country.

Two opportunities for Christmas caroling, on December 3rd and December 18th, were both great successes. The first brought about 20 folks to carol around downtown Oak Park and drew a wonderful reception (everything from dancing children to passersby spontaneously joining the group!). And the second brought Christmas cheer to senior living centers The Sheridan and Brookdale, via a group of about 10 carolers, who enjoyed treats at Grace before setting out, and who were also received with delight. At both locations, residents joined in the singing.

We intend to carry forward both initiatives in 2023.

Looking Forward

Some of the Evangelism Committee's 2022 projects will be repeated in 2023 and will hopefully become Grace traditions; others have reached their successful conclusions, freeing up the Committee to take on new projects. In particular, the Committee looks forward to a closer collaboration with Social Ministry, hopefully resulting in a service opportunity in which the Grace community can participate as a group, being the body of Christ out in the world in a physical demonstration of the power of faith.

Endowment Fund Committee – 2022 Annual Report

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

Board Member: Liz Thompson (Chair), Karen Brunnsen

Other attendees: Jim McClanahan (Business Office), Daniel Krout (Treasurer), Elizabeth Henderson (Assistant 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, 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 the majority of 2022, 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. Due to volatile market and world conditions, on the recommendation of Fiducient, the committee voted in December 2022 to reallocate funds. Funds are now allocated among three primary asset classes, averaging: 56% in equities, 35% in fixed income, and 9% in other real assets.

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 2022, with church council's approval, the congregation repaid previous borrowings, as follows:

- \$11k of \$60k borrowing for solar system (rebate proceeds to date).

As of December 31, 2022, the outstanding loan balance was \$5000, made up of the remaining solar system loan and accumulated interest.

See below for portfolio performance and the investment summary:

2022 FY Grace portfolio return (July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022): -14.24%

2022 FY Benchmark Target Allocation return: -13.56%

2022 calendar year Grace portfolio return: -17.19%

2022 calendar year Benchmark Target Allocation return: -15.74%

| 2022 Overall Investment Summary: | Investments | Margin Loan |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| January 1, 2022 Investment Balance | 7,335,000 | -20,000 |
| Deposits to the Account: | | |
| Forward in Faith | 649,000 | |
| Repayment of Solar Loan | | -11,000 |
| Dividends and interest income | 234,000 | |
| Annual Distributions to General Fund and Custodial Funds | -308,000 | |
| Change in market value | -1,477,000 | |
| Loan interest expense | | -4000 |
| Other income or expense (including Fiducient Fee of \$34,000) | -34,000 | |
| | | |
| December 31, 2022 Investment Balance | 6,399,000 | |
| December 31, 2022 Margin Loan Balance | | -5000 |
| | | |
| December 31, 2022 Net Asset Value | \$6,394,000 | |

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Thompson, Chair

Finance Committee – 2022 Annual Report

Members: Daniel Krout (Treasurer), Elizabeth Henderson (Assistant Treasurer), Beth Reynolds (Vice President), John Lattyak (Property), Elizabeth Thompson (Endowment)

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

Fiscal 2022 Summary

A financial summary of Fiscal 2022 (ended June 30, 2022) is presented below.

Church and school operating revenue increased by \$257,000 in Fiscal 2022 relative to Fiscal 2021. Operating expenses were \$258,000 higher than the prior year, resulting in a nearly equal operating deficit (\$189K in Fiscal 2022 vs. \$188K in Fiscal 2021). With the onset of Forward in Faith contributions, investment revenue increased to \$193K in Fiscal 2022 and significantly exceeded prior year and budget, resulting in a surplus of \$4000 in fiscal 2022.

| General Fund Fiscal 2022 July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 | | Fiscal 2022 30-Jun-22 | Fiscal 2021 30-Jun-21 | Fiscal 2022 Budget | Fiscal 2022 Actual/Budget |
|--|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Revenues | | | | | |
| | Church Contributions and Other Revenue | 1,818,000 | 1,661,000 | 1,963,000 | (145,000) |
| | School Revenue | 1,366,000 | 1,266,000 | 1,389,000 | (23,000) |
| | Total Revenues | 3,184,000 | 2,927,000 | 3,352,000 | (168,000) |
| Expenses | | | | | |
| | Personnel | 2,560,000 | 2,425,000 | 2,652,000 | 92,000 |
| | Benevolence | 166,000 | 197,000 | 178,000 | 12,000 |
| | Property | 258,000 | 270,000 | 356,000 | 98,000 |
| | Boards | 74,000 | 56,000 | 98,000 | 24,000 |
| | School | 118,000 | 98,000 | 140,000 | 22,000 |
| | Administration | 97,000 | 69,000 | 94,000 | (3,000) |
| | Total Expenses | 3,373,000 | 3,115,000 | 3,518,000 | 245,000 |
| | Operating Deficit | (189,000) | (188,000) | (166,000) | (77,000) |
| Investment Revenue and expenses | | | | | |
| | Endowment Income, now including Forward in Faith contributions (20% to budget, 80% to Future). | 193,000 | 79,000 | 166,000 | 27,000 |
| | Net before extraordinary items | 4,000 | (109,000) | - | (50,000) |
| Extraordinary Items: | | | | | |
| | Paycheck Protection Program forgiven loan | | 514,000 | - | |
| | Contributions earmarked for asset purchases | | 75,000 | - | |
| | Transfers: custodial account for asset purchases | 100,000 | 106,000 | - | |
| | Net Church and School Revenue and Expenses | 104,000 | 586,000 | - | |

Fiscal 2023 through December 31, 2022, Summary

Grace continues to experience seasonality of cash flow, but our cash position has been fairly strong throughout fiscal 2022 and now in fiscal 2023. School revenue is well above prior year due largely to higher enrollment and new revenue from the Forward in Faith school endowment campaign.

A financial summary of the first six months of Fiscal 2023 (ended December 31, 2022) 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 in the prior year but still below budget. The operating surplus for the first six months of Fiscal 2023 was approximately \$43,000 compared with a deficit of \$73,000 in fiscal 2022.

| General Fund July to December 2022 | YTD Actual Thru 12/2022 | YTD Actual Thru 12/2021 | YTD Budget Thru 20/2022 | YTD Budget/Actual |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Revenues | | | | |
| Church Contributions and Other | 917,699 | 928,752 | 981,000 | (63,301) |
| School | 827,499 | 655,362 | 786,200 | 41,299 |
| Total Revenues | 1,745,198 | 1,584,114 | 1,767,200 | (22,002) |
| Expenses | | | | |
| Personnel | 1,235,658 | 1,243,237 | 1,334,300 | 98,642 |
| Benevolence | 90,882 | 83,000 | 88,500 | (2,382) |
| Property | 170,004 | 165,093 | 177,900 | 7,896 |
| Boards | 47,363 | 39,009 | 50,250 | 2,887 |
| School | 105,509 | 81,141 | 74,450 | (31,059) |
| Administration | 52,995 | 45,197 | 41,800 | (11,195) |
| Total Expenses | 1,702,412 | 1,656,677 | 1,767,200 | 64,788 |
| Net Total Surplus (Deficit) | 42,787 | (72,563) | - | 42,787 |

Challenges

- Full operating expenses: Church and school operations continue to move toward normal levels. 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 2023-2024, we anticipate needing to project higher expenses.

Respectfully submitted,
Daniel Krout, Treasurer

Personnel Committee – 2022 Annual Report

Committee Members: Jade Augustine (chair), Mike Carioscio, Principal Bill Koehne (*ex officio*), Pastor Dave Lyle, (*ex officio*), Jim McClanahan (*ex officio*), and John Bouman.

The Personnel Committee held two meetings in 2022 (April and October), in addition to corresponding as needed via email throughout the year. 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 Q4 2022 we reviewed the Handbook, and proposed changes will be submitted early 2023 for approval.

In addition to the regular standing items, other topics for discussion and review during 2022 included:

- Grace background check process
- Sabbatical leave policy
- Employment law and policy review
- Review Grace Employee Handbook

Respectfully submitted,
Jade Augustine, Chair

Property Committee – 2022 Annual Report

Committee Members: Michael Gillespie, Joel Lueking, Tom Swanson, Tom Demas, Josh Wood, Drew Niermann, John Lattyak (chairperson)

Ex Officio: Jim McClanahan, Business Office Administrator, Dave Pfeiffer, Facilities Manager

2022 Summary

ONGOING PROJECTS/ISSUES (NOT PRIORITIZED)

1. Looking to have woodwork throughout the facility stripped and refinished.
2. Landscaping management for next season.
3. Continuing to replace existing lights with LED lights throughout the whole building complex.
4. All-building security system that will cover all aspects of building security is being researched (lighting, door security, cameras, alarms).
5. Memorial Garden, investigating alternatives for repairing existing fountain lights and wall illumination lights, or replacing with different lighting.
6. Exploring addition of sign on Division side of building to better identify GLCS.
7. Video Messaging-Looking to install TV in the atrium and begin cloud-based message scrolling in both the atrium and Fellowship Hall.
8. Continuing to research geothermal.
9. Organ repairs near completion.
10. Specialist evaluated stained glass – getting bid for cracked panes.
11. Getting bids for additional tuckpointing on sanctuary exterior south wall.
12. Getting bids for wall repairs various locations.
13. Working with solar panel vendor on inverter issues causing parts of the system to be down.
14. GLCS staff working on mezzanine cleanup and with groups using closet space in the mezzanine.
15. Energy assessment completed, awaiting report.

CLOSED PROJECTS/ISSUES (NOT PRIORITIZED)

1. Property manager position filled (Dave Pfeiffer)
2. Roof leaks at various locations repaired by GLCS property management staff.
3. New roof installed on Grace House.
4. Downspout leak causing damage to sanctuary south wall repaired.
5. GLSC property management staff repaired sanctuary south wall that was damaged by downspout leak.
6. Pastor Modahl tribute plaque narrative completed and installed next to portrait.
7. Five HVAC roof top units replaced. Cost funded by anonymous donor and ComEd rebates.
8. Library box installed in Grace Garden (Eagle Scout Project).

Respectfully submitted,
John Lattyak, Committee Chair

Audit Committee – 2022 Annual Report

Committee Members: Kathy Hale, Tom Swanson, Jane Andrew, Casey Blashill, John Rudy
(Tim Sandvoss also contributed)

After a period of inactivity, the Audit Committee was reestablished in 2022 consistent with Section 3.09 of the bylaws. The objective of the committee is to provide an independent assessment of the church and school finances, controls and operations. To facilitate this, the committee has developed a working list of independent testing activities which began to be implemented in 2022 and will continue in future reporting periods. The committee has also begun to document appropriate procedures governing its activities and requirements.

Committee activities performed in 2022 included:

- Participated in the engagement of an external audit firm (Sassetti) to perform an independent audit report as required by Grace bylaws every three years. The independent report covered the fiscal year ended 6/30/21.
- Reviewed the unaudited internally prepared financial statements for the fiscal year ended 6/30/22
- Independent testing activities in 2022 included:
 1. Reconciliation of bank accounts
 2. Sample testing of giving statements
 3. Review of expense management practices, including sample transaction testing
 4. Review of Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan application, supporting documentation, application for forgiveness and revenue recognition (2021)

Conclusions:

Based on independent audit work performed by the committee, the books and records of Grace appear to be materially accurate in all respects. Testing performed found only minor exceptions of immaterial amounts which have been discussed with the Director of Administration and Finance. Overall controls governing financial operations appear to be in place and operating as intended.

Respectfully submitted,

John T. Rudy
Audit Committee Chair

Grant Review Committee – 2022 Annual Report

Members: John Bouman (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 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 2022: Legacy of Grace Endowment Fund, and the Stauffer Music Fund.

Legacy of Grace Endowment Fund

The Legacy of Grace Endowment Fund was established in 2002 as an enduring thank offering 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 2022 year (June 30, 2022) was \$3,568,000. The amount of scheduled distributions in fiscal 2023 is \$178,000.

Grants from Legacy in calendar year 2022 included: Vocation Scholarships, Grace Lutheran School Reading Curriculum, Pastor Lyle sabbatical.

To request a Legacy grant application form, call or e-mail church secretary Esther Armstrong (earmstong@graceriverforest.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 2022 year (June 30, 2022) was \$371,000. The amount of scheduled distributions in fiscal 2023 is \$18,000

Grants from Stauffer in calendar year 2022 included: Pastor Costello sabbatical, Masks for the choirs during the pandemic, Continuing education for School Music Teacher, Sponsorship of the Kontras Quartet residency at Grace, Repairs to the organ.

Respectfully submitted,
Felicia Niermann

Refugee Ministry - 2022 Annual Report

Grace Members on Co-Sponsor teams:

Linda Street, Richard & Susie Calhoun, Loretta & John Lattyak, Mary Rasmusson, Mary Goetting, Jo-Ellyn Dorsey, Richard Martens, Emily Holtz, Scott Street, Hannah Langhoff, Glenn Johnson, Allison & Avery Tan

First of great thanks to all at Grace who continue to support this ministry: Those who pray for us and our refugee families, those who generously give financially, those who give their time and donations and particularly those who stepped up boldly as volunteers for our first Co-Sponsor team through RefugeeOne. Now completing it's second year, this ministry has partnered with Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church and Pilgrim Congregational Church to welcome three families. Families one and three came to us from refugee camps in Malaysia and Rwanda after many years in the camps. Our second family was evacuated out of Afghanistan. All are now finding their way in their new homes in Chicago thanks to your support. This is truly a "hands and feet of Jesus" ministry, and we are humbly blessed as we look forward to welcoming future families. If you would like to be part of this ministry, contact Linda Street kentuckystreets53@gmail.com.

BALLOT

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

OR

YES NO

Officers of the Congregation

| | | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Vice President | Beth Reynolds | 2 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Secretary | Gwen Gotsch | 2 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Assistant Treasurer | Elizabeth Henderson | 2 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Board of Spiritual Life

| | | | |
|-----------------|---------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Paulette Reddel | 3 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Lori Martin | 3 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Board of Discipleship

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Jessica Bullock (Council Rep) | 2 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Jessica Bullock | 3 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tina Baird | 3 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Board of Finance and Property

| | | | |
|------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Mike Gillespie (Council Rep) | 2 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mike Gillespie | 3 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Drew Niermann | 3 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |