

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

---



GRACE  
LU<sup>+</sup>HERAN  
CHURCH  
& SCHOOL



**Page 4**

Agenda and Congregation Statistics

**Page 5**

Letter from the President

**Pages 6-7**

Pastor Reports

**Page 8**

Grace Lutheran School

**Page 9**

Ministry of Music

**Page 10**

Office of Administration and Finance

**Page 11**

Communications

**Pages 12-19**

**Board of Discipleship**

Children, Youth, and Family Ministry

Elementary Education Committee

Adult Education

Benevolence Committee

Justice and Peace Committee

Library Committee

Social Ministry Committee

**Pages 20-25**

**Board of Spiritual Life**

Altar Guild (no report submitted)

Worship Committee

Health Committee

New Members Committee

Stewardship Committee (no report submitted)

Fellowship Committee

Evangelism Committee

**Pages 26-29**

**Board of Finance and Property**

Budget Committee (no report submitted)

Finance Committee

Endowment Committee

Personnel Committee (no report submitted)

Property Committee

**Page 30**

Audit Committee

Grant Review Committee (no report submitted)

Refugee Committee (no report submitted)

**Page 31**

Ballot

# Congregation Meeting

---

## **Agenda**

January 26, 2025

- Welcome and devotion
- Approval of minutes from January 2024 Annual Meeting
- Report on programs
- Senior Pastor Dave Lyle's Report
- Principal Dr. Taylor-Imani Gates Report
- Financial Report
- Election of Council and Board Members
- Closing prayer
- Blessing
- Adjournment

## **Congregation Statistics 2024**

- Baptisms..... 12
- Confirmations..... 12
- New Members (Adults)..... 16
- Transfer out..... 6
- Released..... 1
- Grace membership (Baptized)..... 1,088
- Communicant Members..... 929
- Associate Members..... 31

# John Bouman, Council President

---

Dear fellow members of Grace:

Happy New Year to you! This year brings an unusual amount of change in the world around us. The new national administration, for better or worse, promises to drive all kinds of change, across many laws and systems and lives. We wonder how we will be challenged, personally and organizationally, and how we will respond. We also continue to see new weather-driven disasters, currently the Los Angeles wildfires, and pockets of warfare and oppression around the world that drive people to our borders seeking safety and peace. Apart from our political opinions, there is no doubt about the climate of change and of tension around the possible fallout for ourselves and our communities, including our community of fellow-believers at Grace.

We also have ample examples of God's blessings and grace. The wonderful faith-driven life of humility and service of President Jimmy Carter, and the national moment of reflection and respect for such a man and such a life. The fresh possibility for peace in Gaza and Israel. And, closer to home, the ample facilities, excellent staff, beautiful music, effective and moving preaching, and comforting solidarity that we are blessed with here at Grace. Plus the fine and steady impact of the many ministries that we do together.

As always, we are called to do our best to discern God's will amidst all of this, and then to organize ourselves as best we can to carry it out. As always, we have to make decisions with unknown consequences and take actions with unknowable outcomes. But as forgiven children of God, who knows each of us by name, we can do this with a sense of peace and confidence and a commitment to due diligence and responsibility. And so...

We have two congregational meetings each year to refresh ourselves about our work together, make decisions, and plan actions. One of those meetings is upcoming, on Sunday, January 26, right after church in Fellowship Hall. A light lunch will be served.

Please attend the meeting. We are not able to livestream, so your presence would be appreciated. Happy New Year!

Peace,

John Bouman  
*Council President*

# The Rev. David R. Lyle, Senior Pastor

---

*“Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord.  
They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots to the stream.” Jeremiah 17:7-8*

Grace Lutheran Church and School is a community with deep roots. We are also a community reaching out boldly into the future. Rooted in our shared baptismal promises, we know that God has been active in our lives. As we have died with Christ and risen to Christ’s glory, the Holy Spirit beckons us to follow. Thanks be to the God who continues to give new growth.

2024 was the first full calendar year of worshipping all together on Sunday mornings at a single 10:00 a.m. service. It is so good to be together, lifting our voices in praise of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God’s presence was seen, too, in our varied worship life. This year, we celebrated the Sacrament of Holy Baptism twelve times, watching as twelve new siblings in Christ joined the priesthood we all share. We also celebrated Confirmation for twelve young adults. Sixteen adults joined us in ministry as new members, along with several children. We also commended eleven saints into God’s unfailing care as we worshipped at funerals and memorial services.

While each of those eleven saints are deeply missed and mourned, the death of Julie Hinz, our Discipleship and Fellowship Coordinator, was a particularly difficult loss for our community. One of the foci of Julie’s recent work was improving our funeral hospitality. The work she did ended up being a blessing to her own family, and to many others too. I am grateful to the Grace staff who helped pick up Julie’s ministry, and to the many members of Grace who come together to make funerals and funeral luncheons such powerful moments of God’s abundant care for God’s people.

There are so many ways that Grace members care for one another. Of special note are our Stephen Ministers, our Cornerstones Cooks, and our GriefShare facilitators. Thank you to these dedicated volunteers!

Reflecting on the past fiscal year, I give thanks once more for your generosity. To have ended the year with a surplus, again, is a marvelous sign of God’s grace. Our financial situation at the midway point of the current fiscal year is challenging, for various reasons. Generous giving is not one of those reasons. Your financial support continues to be marvelous, and I know that your support, and the efforts of a newly reorganized Stewardship Committee, will help see us through.

I give thanks for all the people with whom I am privileged to work, including my pastoral colleagues, Pastor Costello and Pastor Medlin. It is a joy to be in ministry with our new Principal, Dr. Gates. I also continue to give thanks for the many years of faithful, servant leadership given to Grace by Mr. Koehne. I am personally grateful for the chance to work with John Bouman, our President, and Dan Lehmann, the Chair of the Board of Spiritual Life.

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.

As we look to 2025, I am excited that Grace is entering into an intentional time of strategic planning. We will be working with Pastor Dave Daubert (DMin, PhD) of Day 8 Strategies, who comes to us highly recommended. You will be hearing more about this process, and how you can be involved, in the near future.

Thanks be to the God of deep roots and life-giving waters, the God whose Spirit calls us into the future, into service and care for our neighbors, and into the adventure of life together.

In Jesus’ name,

Dave Lyle  
*Senior Pastor*

# The Rev. Troy Medlin, Associate Pastor

---

*“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.” 1 Corinthians 12:12-13*

Beloved children of God,

This November, I celebrated four years as your associate pastor. Each day, I rejoice that we have been called together to be the body of Christ in this place. What an incredible gift you are, people of Grace. What a gift it is for me to have a front row seat to God’s work in and through you. I am grateful for all of the ways we have partnered together in the work of the gospel and look with anticipation for all the years ahead. Every year, I am most grateful for the gift of gathering together around the risen Christ who comes among us in bread, wine, water, word, and in your real presence week after week. I never tire of meeting you on Sunday mornings as we encounter the Living Word who raises us from our deaths and calls us into new and abundant life.

I want to express my deep appreciation for all of the staff that make ministry such a blessing. Pastor Lyle and Pastor Costello are both thoughtful, encouraging, and supportive colleagues. What a gift to be partners in ministry with two pastors who are so centered in the gospel of Jesus Christ. I’m especially thankful for the close collaboration I share with Julie Modrich. Her work related to Sunday School, Confirmation, and beyond is indispensable 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, presiding at funerals, and providing pastor care alongside Pastor Lyle, the elders, and Stephen Ministers bring me much joy. These practices keep me grounded and 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.

I am blessed to work with so many talented lay leaders on and off committees. Particularly all those who are on the Board of Discipleship and all the committees that roll up to that board. Each of those 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. I encourage you to check out all of their reports in this booklet and join all that God is up to among us and ways that you might plug in.

Serving as pastor to the youth of Grace continues to inspire me as well. Some of the highlights in 2024 were a trip to Feed My Starving Children along with other high schoolers from Good Shepherd and United Lutheran Church in Oak Park, Youth Sunday, and youth proclaiming the passion at the noon Good Friday liturgy. I am looking forward to more opportunities to gather with other Lutheran high schoolers from our area as well as a potential ASP mission trip in summer 2025.

I continue to serve as the pastoral representative for both the Men of Grace small group and the young adult Theology on Tap group. We are always looking for new folks, so join us sometime. Currently the Men of Grace group is reading *The Gift of Imperfection* by Brene Brown. I also continue to serve as a volunteer chaplain for the Oak Park Police Department as well on the Candidacy Committee of the Metro Chicago Synod of the ELCA.

I look with hope towards this coming year. I cannot wait to see where our crucified and risen savior will lead us together in 2025. Wherever that is, I know he will meet us from the other side with arms outstretched. We will continue to become who we already are, the body of Christ. Thanks be to God!

With you on the journey,

Troy Medlin  
*Associate Pastor*

*“Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.” Proverbs 16:3 (NIV)*

Greetings Grace Lutheran Community,

The 2024-2025 school year started with a lot of changes, and we simply had to trust God. In August, we hired a new Principal, formulated the Student Support Team (SST) to include a Coordinator, Reading Specialist and School Counselor, and embraced a full time Assistant Principal, just to name a few. I am encouraged by the dedication and perseverance of our faculty! So far this year, we have really focused on rebuilding and being intentional about our approach to Christian education given the breadth of needs of students today.

As a school, we are working on enrollment and retainment—with integrity in mind. Currently, we have 194 students enrolled. There are currently 15 applications in our admissions portal for the 2025-2026 School Year. Academically, in service and in extra-curriculars, we have had a wonderful start to the year! For our fall MAP testing cycle, we noted growth in all areas. In Math, 84% of our students scored above the national average, and 59% scored at or above the 80th percentile. In Reading, 74% of our students scored above the national average. Finally in Language Usage, 80% of our students scored above the national average, and 49% scored at or above the 80th percentile. In service, we have seen an increase in Christmas program participation this year and a more of a willingness for students to serve around the building! In terms of extra-curriculars, our students earned 2nd Place in the local Mathlete competition and are offering Robotics, Spanish and Chess enrichment—alongside of our rigorous, traditional academic program. We are so very proud of our students!

The Forward in Faith endowment has continued to grow. Due to the thoughtful giving of our donors, we now have over \$2.1M in pledges and donations to the campaign, with nearly \$1.8M of that amount having already been received. We are grateful to our contributors that help make the work we are called to do possible.

Looking ahead, we will continue to shift as needed to better be in alignment with where we are headed as a united, intentional academic program. This includes, but is not limited to, improvements to our admissions process (new “Grace Viking Shadow Experience”), faculty morale and culture (appreciation initiatives, professional development opportunities, being mindful of faculty giftings and areas to serve, etc.), and being intentional about serving our student body with the lens of the whole child.

I am honored to serve alongside of our dedicated faculty at Grace and remain grateful for the opportunity to lead such an amazing group of educators. We stand committed to celebrating faith, fostering and cultivating knowledge and building character within our students. Grace Lutheran Church, thank you for your continued support of, prayers for and faithfulness to our academic program.

Serving Grace,

Taylor-Imani A. Gates, Ph.D.,  
*Grace School Principal*



# Ministry of Music

---

Dear Grace Congregation,

What a full year of ministry 2024 was and what incredible blessings lie ahead for us as a church and school. Some highlights of 2024 include:

- Grace's Parish Choir singing for worship every Sunday, and for many special services, including funerals or memorial services of several Grace members.
- Grace School children participating regularly in worship as part of a choir or handbell ensemble.
- Grace's Women's Choir adding their voices to the worship life of the congregation.
- Parish Choir and school choirs singing for special worship services during Lent and Advent, and again for Palm Sunday, Easter, and at Christmas.
- The Bach Cantata Vespers ministry continuing with great success. This ministry is now in its 54th year.
- Grace's Parish Choir singing three Bach cantatas in a concert with the Leipzig Baroque Orchestra as part of Bachfest Leipzig.

These highlights emphasize the focus of Grace's music ministry, which is to prepare people of all ages to sing and lead the church's song. Every choir member at Grace Church and School is equipped to offer their voice in praise of God and in thanksgiving for all that God has given us.

This includes you. Realize today that your voice, whether from the pew or as part of a choir, is indeed a vital part of the church's song. The hymns and chants we sing proclaim the faith and aid our devotion to Christ.

I give thanks to my colleagues in the ministry of music at Grace for their dedication all year long. To Johanna Johnson for her work at Grace School, Gwen Gotsch for her work with the Women's Choir and handbells in the school, Janel Dennen for her continued work and organization in preparing Sunday worship bulletins, and Tim Spelbring for his dedication to offering the very best in our Bach Cantata Vespers liturgies as organist, thank you! With them, it is a joy to lead this ministry at Grace.

Keep on worshipping, keep on praying, and keep on singing. Your voice matters to the church's song.

In Christ,

The Rev. Michael D. Costello  
*Grace Cantor*

# Office of Administration and Finance

---

The Office of Administration and Finance staff did not change in 2024 –Jim McClanahan as Director, Cecelia Thornton as Assistant, Jose Meza as Technology Manager, Dave Pfeiffer as Facilities Manager, and Peter Modrich as Facilities Assistant.

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

- 2024-25: In June, the congregation approved the 2024-25 budget of \$3,788,100 (7.18% increase from 2023-24).
  - At the half-way point, we are running a \$219,000 deficit.
- 2023-24 - At the January 2025 Congregational Meeting, the congregation is receiving the unaudited 2023-24 financial statements and an Agreed-Upon Procedures report prepared by an outside accounting firm.
  - Church and school revenue were under budget, but church and school operating expenses were under budget, resulting in an operating surplus for the year, almost equal to the 2022-23 surplus. The endowment fund enjoyed a stronger year than 2022-23, resulting in an even larger overall surplus for 2023-24.

As to facilities:

- Over the summer, we replaced carpeting in certain classrooms and hallways, and we made major roof repairs to portions of the flat roof. The carpet was over 20 years old and the roof even older.
- Grace's solar panels, installed in January 2020, generated about 9% of our electricity needs in 2024 (12% last year). The percentage decreased because the panels were taken out of service during August and September while the flat roof was being replaced.

On the technology front, we continue to enhance Grace's network, internet, and audio/video, including the sanctuary sound system.

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

---

In August, I joined Grace as the new Communications Coordinator, and I have been focusing on how to improve how the congregation receives communication in an effort to keep everyone well informed.

Some highlights from the last few months include:

- A website redesign to make it easier to find information, and it includes updating some pages with current information. Photos were also changed and some new pages were added. If you haven't seen the changes yet, check it out!
- Grace Notes has gotten a refresh with a new header, more photos, and changes to how it is structured. It also went digital for those that prefer to not receive a paper copy.
- Weekly Announcements also received a design and structure refresh, and I added a large-print version.
- For social media, I updated the information on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to make it easier for people to find our page and learn more about Grace. Posts on Facebook and Instagram have also become more consistent and include information about upcoming events, sermons, faith-based questions, and more.
- The TV in the Atrium now displays information about Grace and will continue to be improved in 2025 with a new design and more information.
- On the bulletin board between the Sanctuary and Atrium, I have turned it into an "All about Grace" board, and it includes worship information, upcoming events, weekly schedule, and more. If you would like your group's information included, let me know.
- For Grace School, I have taken over as editor of Amazing Grace, Annual Fund, and their Annual Report.
- I have also been learning how to use ACS, Grace's database.

It has been wonderful getting to know so many of you these past few months, and I look forward to getting more involved in 2025 and getting to learn more about what makes Grace so special.

Sincerely,

Amanda Smith

*Communications Coordinator*

# Board of Discipleship

---

## **Board Members**

Lawrence Barber (Justice & Peace), Stephanie Wilkening (Social Ministry), Jessica Bullock (EEC), Hannah Langhoff (Adult Education), Deb Stonich (Benevolence), Tina Baird (Children and Family Ministries, and Committee Chairperson), Linda Street (Library and Chairperson), Kristi Underhill (Grace School), and Pastor Troy Medlin (Grace Church)

Throughout 2024, the Board of Discipleship has met on a monthly basis to collaborate with cooperative committees. The emphasis has been on sharing opportunities, for congregation members and the church as a whole, to grow in spiritual strength and community outreach.

Our various Committees were active in providing leadership training in diversity, equality, and inclusion. Speakers were brought in for further education in topics related to our current world events and how they form our faith.

We have continued to welcome refugees and new neighbors in assisting families to find comfortable homes, and employment. The congregation, school, and community members have graciously donated items to provide clothing and warm meals to charitable organizations.

Children and Family Ministries collaborated with Grace School on an increasing level to bring youth and families together in fellowship and opportunities in exploring faith formation.

2024 was a year to be proud of for the Board of Discipleship, and we hope the Grace congregation has felt the support and passion we've brought to our activities.

Tina Baird  
*Committee Chairperson*

# Children and Family Ministry

---

During this past year, Children and Family Ministry has continued to focus on helping children and teens explore faith and Christian living in partnership with other ministries of Grace Church.

In the current 2024-25 ministry year, we adopted a new model for leading these programs, with Pastor Dave Lyle, Pastor Troy Medlin, and myself rotating as leaders in Sunday School, Confirmation and New Member classes. Julie Hinz was also part of this rotation in the fall. In her last week before falling ill, she taught the Lord's Prayer in a Sunday confirmation class, organized the FEAST kick-off event the next Friday evening, and led the New Members Class on the next Sunday. She shined brightly in all of these roles, so passionate for her ministry. My heart feels heavy with her passing, but I am grateful for the blessing of Julie's ministry here at Grace, in fellowship and faith formation, helping with the rummage sale, her role in GLOW worship and the Good Friday Journey to the Cross service.

This unexpected loss has added new dimensions to my own work here at Grace, including working with grieving families to coordinate funeral lunches, organizing the New Member reception, coordinating the Advent suppers, and, with Esther Armstrong, navigating the Ministry Scheduler Pro software that schedules volunteers who assist with worship services.

Faith Formation instruction highlights:

- Sunday School (PK to 6th grade): 47 children are enrolled in Sunday School, but attendance is light from week to week.
- Confirmation: Twelve ninth-graders were confirmed in October. We currently have nine confirmands in each of the 2025 and 2026 confirmation classes. Confirmation instruction is led by the pastors and Julie Modrich.
- Mentor Ministry led by Jessica and Keith Bullock: Twelve adult mentors worked with our 2024 confirmands through their confirmation in the fall, and the nine 2025 confirmands were connected with mentors this past November.
- Church and School PicnicFest on September 8 The first year of combining the church and school picnic with Oktoberfest was a success — over 220 people attended and enjoyed a menu of hamburgers, hotdogs, brats, sauerkraut, potato salad, watermelon and dessert, with beer donated by Kinslahger and Around the Bend breweries.
- Middle School Christmas Party About forty-five 6-8 graders gathered for Christmas cheer, open gym, a gift exchange, and a menu of pizza, hot cocoa and cookies. I'm grateful for the twelve parent volunteers who helped with the party.
- Communion Retreat Eleven fourth graders and their parents attended the Friday-evening retreat on March 1 led by Pastor Troy and Julie Hinz. Students designed and glazed a chalice and decorated a white garment with symbols of their life and faith. Families of our first communion students communed together on Palm Sunday and fourth-graders talked about symbols of their life and faith during the Education Hour that morning.
- Confirmation Retreat Seven confirmands joined Pastor Troy and Julie Modrich for a program at Lutherdale titled "Called to BE GOD'S PEOPLE." We shared in worship, playing, laughing and growing together in Christ while meeting children and adults from many other Lutheran churches.
- Service projects We continue to gather children, their families, and other congregation members to participate in various service projects, including packing lunches for distribution by local service agencies.

I am grateful for the many volunteers who help to make these events and programs successful. Working together we grow in both faith and friendship. I look forward to another year of service and fellowship with the people of Grace Church and School.

Together in Christ,

Julie Modrich  
*Children's Ministry Coordinator*

## Committee Members

Joanna Schubkegel (Chairperson), Jade Augustine, Janel Bishop, Jessica Bullock, Ed Kelly, Ed Mason, and Jane Wilcox, Dr. Taylor-Imani Gates, Grace School Principal (Non-voting Member)

Thanks to Joanna Schubkegel, whose term on the EEC ended in December 2024, for her service as Chair! Jade Augustine and Ed Mason will serve as Co-Chairs of the EEC in 2025.

Thanks also to Sara Chizzo, and Nicole Schmidt, who stepped down from the EEC in 2024, for their years of service. Mike Carioscio will serve as an EEC member in 2025.

Thanks also to former Principal Bill Koehne, who left his position as Principal in June 2024 after 12 years of faithful service, for his many contributions to Grace Lutheran School and the school community!

The EEC is responsible for overseeing the operations of Grace Lutheran School. The EEC accomplishes this by setting school policies (subject to the Board of Discipleship and Church Council 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 school.

In 2024 the EEC did the following:

- Helped oversee, in partnership with the Principal search committee and other church leaders, the process of hiring a new Principal, Dr. Taylor-Imani Gates, for the 2024-25 school year.
- Increased Communication/Expanded Representation
  - communicated with teachers via the School Leadership Team consisting of teachers nominated by their peers and administration.
  - recruited three new members to the EEC: Jade Augustine, Mike Carioscio, and Jane Wilcox.
- Administration
  - surveyed the teachers and evaluated the Principal's performance.
  - handled personnel issues and concerns, as well as hiring decisions.
  - set the 2024-2025 school year calendar.
  - updated policies and procedures.
  - identified and named the interim Principal, Mike Carioscio, to serve through the transition period to a new Principal.
- Marketing
  - engaged with Ana Garcia to support her efforts and access her progress.
- Parents and Grace Community
  - conducted a parent survey to gauge satisfaction on a range of topics and met with parents.
  - supported the Grace Walk-A-Thon and Graceful Evening events.
- Finances
  - an EEC member regularly attended church Finance Committee meetings and updated the EEC on financial matters impacting the school ministry.
  - set tuition and updated variable tuition policies.
  - an EEC member took part in the Grace Budget Committee meetings.
  - Conducted an audit of the school's tuition process, led by Mike Carioscio

Respectfully submitted,

Jade Augustine and Ed Mason  
*Committee Co-Chairpersons*

## Committee Members

Dan Cattau, Jim Kerns, Hannah Langhoff (Chairperson), Troy Medlin (Pastoral Representative), and Laura Merwin

The Adult Education committee saw several changes this year. Ted Anton, the previous committee chair, moved to Iowa, and Hannah Langhoff took over as chair. We also experimented with scheduling Adult Ed speakers and Bible studies on alternating Sundays, thinking that this would allow people to attend both Adult Ed and Bible study without having to choose between them. However, most people prefer to attend one or the other, and several regular Adult Ed attendees remarked that they would have liked more speakers. As a result, we've decided to return to scheduling Adult Ed and Bible study separately.

In January, Jim Kerns gave a talk titled "Minding the Empathy Gap," and the Rev. Dr. Karoline Lewis spoke on "Lessons at the Well: What the Samaritan Woman Teaches Us." (Lewis is the author of *Belonging: 5 Keys to Unlock Your Potential as a Disciple*, which was the basis of the Lenten congregational book study.) In April, there was a panel discussion on Seminex held after church instead of during the education hour; the panel comprised the Rev. Dr. Kurt Hendel, Rev. Bruce Modahl, Rev. Karl Reko, and Ruth Reko. Later in the month, Elyssa Salinas-Lazarski spoke about Luther's writings on chastity. In May, Rev. Dean Lueking, pastor emeritus of Grace, spoke about Seminex and how it had affected the Grace community.

Adult Education went on hiatus during the summer as usual. Our first speaker in September was Dr. William Schultz, who presented on the history of Evangelicals and capitalism. Gwen Gotsch spoke about visiting a church in Germany where one of her ancestors served as pastor before immigrating to the United States. Jim Kerns gave a presentation titled "Faithful Consciousness of Body, Mind, and Spirit." In October, Rev. Angela Denker visited Grace and spoke on "The Threat of Christian Nationalism and How to Combat It." As with the Seminex panel, this talk was held after church, and members of several area congregations attended. In December, Elizabeth Palmer of The Christian Century gave her annual presentation on the best books of the year.

In-person attendance has averaged 10-14 people per session. We have continued to hold hybrid sessions with the option of attending via Zoom, although there have been fewer Zoom attendees this year. In 2025, we hope to schedule a fuller slate of speakers and publicize them better to increase attendance. We also hope to add several new members to the committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Hannah Langhoff  
*Committee Chairperson*

## Committee Members

Scott Street (Chairperson), Esther Armstrong, Steve Beck, Jessica Bullock, Val Spiller, Deb Stonich, and Shawn Vogen

Thanks to the prayerful generosity of the Grace congregation, the Benevolence Committee was entrusted with \$182,000 to distribute this year—funds directly tied to your tithes from the previous fiscal year. Guided by both your contributions and a strong sense of stewardship, the committee carefully allocated these resources to extend our congregation’s work in and through our benevolence partners. Below is a list of organizations approved by the Council to receive this benevolence funding.

Each year, the Benevolence Committee requests applications from prospective benevolence partners. The committee then conducts an evaluation to finalize our list for the year. There are two essential criteria for all selected benevolence ministries: non-profit organization and alignment with a Christian mission.

Beyond these essential criteria, the organizations are evaluated in the following categories to finalize the recommended partner’s amount of funding they should receive: mission focus, social justice, Grace Lutheran connection, geographic location, responsiveness, Christian-based organization, and impact.

Your continued generosity enables these organizations to offer vital services, from advocating for marginalized individuals to providing essential support for those in need, to helping build opportunities for success both locally and globally. As we look forward to the coming year, we ask for your ongoing investment in this important work. We also invite those who feel called to serve to consider joining the Benevolence Committee, where your gifts and commitment can help guide and expand our outreach. Together, we can continue making a profound impact in our community, our nation, and beyond.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Street  
*Committee Chairperson*

## 2024-25 Grace Benevolence Ministry Recipients:

ELCA Missions/Ministries	Housing Forward	Harmony Community Cares
The Night Ministry	Beyond Hunger	Serving People With a Mission
CCE (Martin, Slovakia)	Refugee One	Hephzibah Children’s Assoc.
New Moms	A House in Austin	Lawndale Christian Legal Aid
Cabrini Green Legal Aid	Cornerstone Academy	L’Arche Chicago
LCFS	LSS of Illinois	Global Refuge
Maywood Fine Arts	ELCA Metro Chicago Synod	Lutheran World Relief
Pangea Ed. Development	LSTC at Chicago	Valparaiso University
Walther Christian Academy	Concordia University Chicago	



# Justice and Peace Committee

---

## Committee Members

Pat Anderson, Karin Danganan, Larry Garber, Ruth Hughes-McElravey, Miriam Moore, Mary Paulson, Lance Wilkening (Chairperson), Stephanie Wilkening, and Rev. Troy Medlin (Pastoral Representative)

Dear Friends in Christ,

In May of 2024, the Justice and Peace Committee held a second Leadership Retreat to continue the journey Grace has undertaken to increase awareness of racial justice issues in our community, and how we as a congregation can understand and navigate cultural differences more effectively. Before attending the retreat, Grace leaders – including members of the Clergy, Staff, Grace Council, Boards, and Committees – completed a survey called the Intercultural Development Inventory, or IDI. The IDI is an assessment of intercultural competence that empowers individuals and groups to engage cultural differences more effectively. At the retreat, Pr. Sunitha Mortha, Associate to the Bishop and Director of Diversity, Equity, and Belonging for the Metro Chicago Synod of the ELCA, reviewed the results of the IDI with the participants.

Based on responses to the survey questions, the IDI locates individuals and groups on a continuum identifying their ability to respond to cultural differences and commonalities. As a group, the Grace leaders fell solidly in the middle of the continuum, at a point termed “Minimization.” The IDI describes this point on the continuum as “an orientation that highlights cultural commonality and universal values and principles that may also mask deeper recognition and appreciation of cultural differences.” Pr. Sunitha remarked that Grace is farther along the continuum than other congregations she has worked with, and she also pointed out that we have opportunities to do more work, individually and as a group, to increase our understanding of other cultures and move toward orientations such as Acceptance and Adaptation that focus on changing behavior in culturally appropriate and authentic ways.

After the retreat, participants received their individual results, along with guidance on how to use the results to further their own journeys along the IDI continuum and increase their awareness of their own culture as well as the cultures of others.

One of the keys to building an understanding of other cultures and communities is to develop relationships with individuals with different backgrounds whose life experiences have shaped them in ways that highlight their uniqueness as children of God. Several committee members had the opportunity in November to engage in fellowship with members of Unidad Lutheran Church in Berwyn after their Day of the Dead service. We learned how this church is serving members of Mexican heritage who celebrate the richness of their culture in the ways they worship God.

Committee members also participated in a Teach-In at Grace in March to learn more about the efforts of Live Free Illinois to raise awareness of the opportunities for expungement and sealing of criminal records. Through these means, individuals who have completed their sentences can get a second chance at life.

Finally, the committee and I continue to grieve the loss of Julie Hinz, whose observations and suggestions challenged us and helped us think about our work in more expansive ways. She was a friend to the committee and to many of us personally. Her absence touches us every day.

Respectfully submitted,

Lance Wilkening  
*Committee Chairperson*

## **Committee Members**

Linda Street (Chairperson), Olinda Fink, Carolyn Garber, Marilyn Fall, and Pastor Troy Medlin (Resource)

The library continues to be a welcoming space on Sunday mornings. The Cornerstones fellowship makes regular use of the space on Wednesday mornings as well. Hearing is often difficult for seniors in the larger meeting areas at Grace. Cornerstones participants are thankful to have access to the library. In addition, GriefShare and Finding Hope groups have found the church library to be an intimate venue for quiet, personal sharing dealing with tender topics. The Grace Knitters, the team folding the Grace Notes and other groups are visitors here as well. We commend the willingness of Grace Staff as they rearrange chairs and tables to facilitate a variety of uses for this space.

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 calls your name.

A seasonal collection of books is also available for check out in the atrium display case. Ask the person at the front desk for access.

Religion in Literature books, available for check out, are regularly ordered so there are at least two copies of each selected text on hand for ALL Grace members who wish to join in the discussions or to just read the books for their own pleasure. Check out the ladder-style shelf for the Religion in Literature books.

Other new books are regularly ordered based on the recommendations of Grace readers. We are always open to suggestions regarding new books.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Street  
*Committee Chairperson*

## Committee Members

Rebecca Dahlstrom, Jo-Ellyn Dorsey, Heidi Hamernik (Co-Chairperson), Susan Hickey, Loretta Lattyak, Julie Modrich, Lance Wilkening, and Stephanie Wilkening (Co-Chairperson)

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 2024.

- Food Drives for local food pantries
  - We held our annual fall food drive and summer food drive for Beyond Hunger in Oak Park, Forest Park Food Pantry and Harmony Community Cares food pantry in Chicago's North Lawndale community. Thanks to children in Grace's Vacation Bible School who helped us sort the proceeds from the summer food drive.
- 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 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.
- Toilet Paper and Diaper Drive
  - Last spring, we collected toilet paper, diapers and feminine hygiene products for Harmony Food Pantry in Chicago's North Lawndale community and New Moms, an organization that serves young mothers and their children.
- Pet Toys
  - In the spring, we partnered with Children and Family Ministries to make cat and dog toys for shelter animals at the Animal Care League in Oak Park.
- Evie Tiemann Memorial School Supply Drive
  - We collected school supplies including backpacks, notebooks, folders, pens, pencils and crayons for Harmony Community Cares Tutoring Program in Chicago's North Lawndale community and Chicagoland Lutheran Educational Foundation (CLEF), which distributed the items to urban Lutheran schools in Chicago. One of the refugee families Grace supports also received some supplies. The drive is named after the late Evie Tiemann, a beloved committee member and passionate educator.
- Christmas Giving
  - We collected about \$3,000 in gift cards from the congregation for the Night Ministry, Oak-Leyden Adult Developmental Services and seniors at Mills Park Tower. We also collected about \$750 in gifts for Lutheran Social Services of Illinois' foster care children and \$750 in gifts and gift cards for New Moms, which serves young mothers and their children. This year, in collaboration with Grace School, as part of our Adopt-a-Stocking program for the Night Ministry, 160 stockings were made and filled with toiletry and sundry items. Special thanks to the sewists who helped to create the stockings.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Hamernik and Stephanie Wilkening  
*Committee Co-Chairpersons*

## **Board Members**

Mark Bouman, Amy Claud, Jo-Ellyn Dorsey, Dan Lehmann (Chairperson),  
Lori Martin, Paulette Reddel, and Rich Schubkegel

The Board of Spiritual Life is composed of elected congregation members who are referred to as elders. 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. Elders meet monthly, usually on the fourth Tuesday evening, and otherwise as needed. Duties during 2024 at Grace included:

- 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.
- The board continues to assess how the move to one Sunday worship service meets the needs of members and community while also reviewing best use for other times on Sunday mornings. Grace changed to a single year-round Sunday service in the fall of 2023. As background, there was a decline in total worship attendance of 6.5 percent 2011-2014; a decline of about 19 percent 2011-2019; COVID affected in-person worship numbers during 2020-2022; and about a 1% decline since switching from two Sunday worship services to one.
- Elders also review volunteer participation in various roles related to worship (i.e., Altar Guild, ushers, greeters, etc.). The Worship Committee hosted a second "Liturgical Backstage Pass" in the fall that explained volunteer positions at Grace. The event netted new volunteers.
- The board conducted an "Offerings Analysis-Last Five Years as of June 30, 2024". It noted there was a small drop in the number of regular contributors, but those that did contribute gave more than generously. Such reviews will be conducted on a regular basis in the future.
- Elders are actively working to energize the Evangelism and Stewardship committees.
- Along with the Fellowship Committee, the elders mourn the death of staff member Julie Hinz. She was instrumental in rebooting the "Feast" gatherings and in planning for the church picnic and observation of emeritus Pastor F. Dean Lueking's 70th anniversary of ordination.
- Elders assist in leading in-person worship in our role as deacons (tending the communion "table") and visit and serve communion to shut-in members of the congregation. We also meet regularly with each pastor and the cantor for support, assessment, and accountability.
- At our regular meetings, elders discuss concerns congregation members bring 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. We also write personal notes of encouragement to confirmands upon their public witness and confirmation.

We acknowledge and thank Mark Bouman and Dan Lehmann who have served on the board the past three years. Both have agreed to stand for re-election over another three years.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel J. Lehmann  
*Board Chairperson*

## **Committee Members**

Mark Bouman, Michael Costello, Leanne Cribbs, Sara Gruendler-Ladler,  
Liz Hanson, Ruth Nelson (Chairperson), and Elyssa Salinas Lazarski

During 2023, the Worship Committee conducted two “Liturgical Backstage Pass” events encouraging additional volunteers for the many committees which support Grace’s worship. For each Sunday service at Grace, 17-19 volunteers (not counting the choir) are required. The “Liturgical Backstage Pass” is a “no commitment” opportunity to explore being a worship volunteer. Our two events were successful in recruiting additional volunteers for Altar Guild, AV, lectors, and gift bearers. Additional efforts are needed in 2025 to recruit for all volunteer groups and especially for Altar Guild and Ushers.

The committee decided that it was appropriate to charge (\$50) for the livestreaming of weddings to be included in the charges paid by the couple to be married. All other livestreaming of services will remain free, and the staffing will be on a voluntary basis.

Throughout the year, in coordination with the Altar Guild, the Worship Committee discussed and researched ways to replace the non-recyclable plastic communion cups currently in use. During the fall, compostable communion cups were successfully implemented for three worship services. Members of the Altar Guilds and the Worship Committee agreed to move forward and order the compostable cups for regular use. Unfortunately, the sole supplier of the compostable communion cups is currently out of stock, so we will need to wait to implement on a full-time basis until the inventory is refilled.

In July, members of the committee enjoyed providing and serving treats following summer worship.

The audio system for worship is currently operating well. The Property Committee is assessing proposals for lighting project revisions. The choir loft lighting has been improved.

During the fall, the Worship Committee began exploring worship space options for smaller services. At present, the large space in our beautiful sanctuary does not always provide the desired intimacy for smaller services. Modular “half pews” were considered as a viable option. Use of the existing pews was discussed, recognizing that length and stability may be an issue. Consensus of the members was that shorter, movable pews are preferable, maintaining the existing aesthetic. Further discussion and involvement of other committees is needed. As a next step, Mark Bouman will be discussing seating arrangements with the Board of Spiritual Life.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Nelson  
*Chairperson*

## **Committee Members**

Bryan Bernard (Chairperson), Margret Burke, Karen Eckstein, Loretta Lattyak, Cindy Rohlfling, Nancy Wohlford, Patty Engebretson, and Jo-Ellyn Dorsey

**Parish Nurse:** The Parish Nurse position has been vacant this past year. Efforts are being made to fill the position.

**Vaccine Clinic:** We hosted the annual vaccine clinic on October 13. The vaccines were administered by Jewel-Osco. The clinic had advanced registration but also accommodated walk-ins. Vaccines offered included the updated Covid vaccine, seasonal flu, RSV, pneumonia, shingles, and tetanus. There were 65 people receiving one or more vaccines. There was a mix of church members and school families.

**Health Committee Table:** The Health Committee table has been present on the first Sunday of the month in the narthex. The table is currently on hold pending hiring a Parish Nurse.

**Prayer Shawls:** New prayer shawls were blessed and are continuously distributed.

Respectfully submitted,

Bryan Bernard  
*Chairperson*

# New Members Committee

---

## **Committee Members**

Pastor David Lyle, Valerie Spiller, Nick Blashill, and Casey Blashill.

The mission of the committee is to 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 being welcomed into membership during a Sunday service. A reception is hosted by the committee members following the service. 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.

We welcomed 9 new members from our Spring 2024 new member class and 11 new members from our Fall 2024 class.

The committee attends all new member sessions and meets in person as needed. However, it does the majority of its planning over email. The committee has a budget of \$400/year for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Since July 1, 2024, we have spent \$175 of our budget (Small Catechism books).

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,

Casey Blashill

# Fellowship Committee

---

## **Committee Members**

Julie Modrich (Non-voting Member) and Rich Schubkegel (Board of Spiritual Life Liaison)

The Fellowship Committee is charged with the goal of improving fellowship and developing initiatives and activities that foster relationships among Grace members.

### Current Activities:

- Advent Suppers
- Epiphany Brunch
- Lenten Suppers
- Summer Coffee Hours
- Feast Groups

As indicated by the absence of committee members listed above, the Fellowship Committee is actively seeking volunteers. To date, the activities outlined above have been supported by Grace staff members Julie Hinz and Julie Modrich. Looking ahead to 2025, our primary goal is to recruit a dedicated committee to sustain these ongoing activities while also exploring new initiatives to enhance fellowship and strengthen relationships within the Grace community.

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Schubkegel  
*Board of Spiritual Life Liaison*



## **Committee Members**

Ed Mason, Paulette Reddel, Linda Street, Scott Street, and Katharine Roller (Chairperson)

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.

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.

In 2024, members of the Evangelism Committee participated in professional development in this area by attending an evangelism conference with Pastor Lyle. Those who attended shared materials and notes with committee members who were unable to attend, and those notes and materials informed the committee's work this year.

That work largely centered on a project regarding a proposed "welcome center" in the Grace building that would serve as a focal point for our efforts to welcome visitors and provide resources for those new to Grace. At the request of the pastors, the Evangelism Committee researched furniture, signage, staffing, location, and handouts for the Welcome Center Project, keeping in mind both aesthetics of the Grace atrium and our goals of accessibility and inclusivity. The Evangelism Committee's work on this project culminated in two alternate proposals for the design and location of a future welcome center, which were submitted to the pastors for approval.

Respectfully submitted,

Katharine Roller  
*Chairperson*

## Committee Members

Elizabeth Henderson (Treasurer), Neal Armstrong (Assistant Treasurer), Beth Reynolds (Vice President), John Lattyak (Property), Elizabeth Thompson (Endowment), Ed Mason (Elementary Education), and Karen Brunssen

## Other Attendees

Jim McClanahan (Business Office) and David Lyle (Sr. Pastor)

Fiscal 2024 Summary: A financial summary of Fiscal 2024 (ended June 30, 2024) is presented below. While church and school operating revenues fell short of budget, operating expenses did as well, resulting in a modest surplus after other income and distributions. Cash was used to fund capital expenditures of \$193,000 in the fiscal year, lower than the \$316,000 spent in fiscal 2023.

	2024 Actual	2024 Budget	2023 Actual
<b>Operating revenue:</b>			
Church contributions	1,823,000	1,947,000	1,705,000
School contributions	1,600,000	1,664,000	1,599,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,423,000</b>	<b>3,611,000</b>	<b>3,304,000</b>
<b>Operating expenses:</b>			
Personnel costs	2,782,000	2,899,000	2,583,000
Benevolence	170,000	177,000	182,000
Property maintenance and supplies	92,000	85,000	84,000
Utilities	138,000	132,000	123,000
Property insurance	48,000	50,000	45,000
Service contracts and leases	82,000	89,000	123,000
Boards and committees	72,000	106,000	86,000
Teacher materials and other	146,000	160,000	150,000
Office supplies	93,000	108,000	96,000
	<b>3,623,000</b>	<b>3,806,000</b>	<b>3,472,000</b>
<b>Net operating deficit</b>	<b>(200,000)</b>	<b>(195,000)</b>	<b>(168,000)</b>
<b>Other church and school income:</b>			
Interest income	29,000	-	-
Use of facilities fee income	22,000	21,000	17,000
Endowment distributions and FIF	200,000	172,000	206,000
Other	10,000	2,000	7,000
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) before transfers</b>	<b>61,000</b>		<b>62,000</b>
Transfers from custodial accounts	51,000		172,000
<b>Net Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>112,000</b>		<b>234,000</b>

# ✠ Finance Committee Continued

Fiscal 2025 through December 31, 2024, Summary: While Grace Church's contributions are significantly ahead of last year's, contributions from the school are behind, and both are falling behind budget with a more significant operating deficit than last year. This is driven mainly by higher than-budgeted expenses at the school; with open positions filled and new hires to support the children of Grace School, personnel costs, and teacher/other school materials are ahead of last year. We anticipate needing at least \$165,000 more in contributions than we had budgeted to offset these extra expenses. Moreover, property-related operating expenses are higher than budget, and higher capital expenditures this fiscal year (\$267,000 for the first six months of fiscal 2025) have been draining cash. That said, liquidity is good, with \$698,000 in cash available in available checking accounts on Dec 31, 2024. This compares to \$909,000 on June 30, 2024.

	July 1-Dec 31, 2024	Budget	July 1-Dec 31, 2023
<b>Operating revenue:</b>			
Church contributions	961,000	988,000	815,000
School contributions	754,000	886,000	804,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,715,000</b>	<b>1,874,000</b>	<b>1,619,000</b>
<b>Operating expenses:</b>			
Personnel costs	1,422,000	1,478,000	1,356,000
Benevolence	91,000	89,000	85,000
Property related	248,000	211,000	189,000
Boards and committees	43,000	51,000	41,000
Teacher materials and other	161,000	104,000	81,000
Other Administration	65,000	57,000	48,000
	<b>2,030,000</b>	<b>1,990,000</b>	<b>1,800,000</b>
<b>Net operating deficit</b>	<b>(315,000)</b>	<b>(116,000)</b>	<b>(169,000)</b>
<b>Other church and school income:</b>			
Interest income	10,000	10,000	13,000
Use of facilities fee income	17,000	11,000	11,000
Endowment distributions and FIF	65,000	81,000	73,000
Other	4,000	14,000	7,000
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) before transfers</b>	<b>(219,000)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(65,000)</b>

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Henderson  
Treasurer

# Endowment Fund Committee

## Appointed Members (subject to term limits)

Jeff Cribbs, JR Reynolds, Julie Christopher, Kirk Carpenter, Mica Just, and Buzz Schwant.

## Board Members

Elizabeth Thompson (Chairperson) and Karen Brunssen

## Other Attendees

Jim McClanahan (Business Office), Elizabeth Henderson (Treasurer), and Neal Armstrong (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.

New Business: In 2024, the Committee completed an investment manager review, an action many institutions take every three to five years. In a similar vein, the Committee is in the process of reviewing Grace’s Investment Policy Statement.

Investment Overview: Grace allocated funds among three primary asset classes, averaging: 56% in equities, 35% in fixed income (e.g., bonds), and 9% in other (“real”) assets such as real estate and commodities. The Grace Endowments do 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 to meet cash flow shortfalls. As of December 31, 2024, the outstanding loan balance was \$0.

See below for portfolio performance and the investment summary:

- 2024 financial year Grace portfolio return (July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024) = +10.57%
- 2024 financial year Benchmark Target Allocation return: +10.97%
- 2024 calendar year Grace portfolio return: +9.14%
- 2024 calendar year Benchmark Target Allocation return: +10.73%

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Thompson  
Chairperson

<b>2024 Overall Investment Summary:</b>	<b>General</b>	<b>FIF</b>
January 1, 2024 Investment Balance	6,410,089	1,171,983
Dividends and interest income	176,117	40,192
Annual Distributions to General Fund and FIF Fund	(298,504)	(37,466)
Change in market value	334,381	379,931
Other income or expense		
Expenses (includes Fiducient fee of 41,196)	(33,833)	(7363)
Capital Gains	97,348	22,265
December 31, 2024 Balance	6,685,598	1,569,542
December 31, 2024 Net Asset Value	6,685,598	1,569,542

## **Committee Members**

Mike Gillespie, Joel Lueking, Josh Wood, Tom Demas, Drew Niermann, and John Lattyak (Chairperson)

## **Ex Officio**

Jim McClanahan (Business Office Administrator) and Dave Pfeiffer (Facilities Manager)

## 2024 Summary

### Ongoing Projects/Issues (Not Prioritized)

- Refinish exterior doors for Bonnie Brae sanctuary entrance and playground entrance.
- Considering building a Welcome Center Area in the atrium.
- Re-evaluate and replace directional signage throughout the building.
- Evaluating roofing replacement under solar panels on east roof area.
- Evaluating replacement of one or two rooftop heating/cooling units and repair of roofing underneath them.
- Evaluating upgrading sanctuary lighting to LEDs.
- Ceiling repairs in choir robe room and hallway to south balcony.
- Update light fixtures in atrium display cases and 1902 room.
- Researching cloud-based message scrolling to both the atrium and Fellowship Hall TV's.

### Closed Projects/Issues (Not Prioritized)

- New roofing installed in southwest corner above 50's classrooms.
- Carpeting replaced throughout various areas of the building.
- Additional tuck pointing completed.
- Plaster repairs.
- New shades were installed throughout much of the building complex.
- Youth room upgrades completed (new floor, cabinets, paint).
- North Apartment renovation (new kitchen appliances, paint, floor coverings).
- Engaged an outside cleaning service for the building.
- Repaired ceiling at top of south stairway in 50's addition.
- Replaced the concrete apron outside the Bonnie Brae sanctuary entrance.
- New carpeting installed to replace old carpeting at Grace House.

Respectfully submitted,

John Lattyak  
*Chairperson*

## Committee Members

Tom Swanson, Jane Andrew, Casey Blashill, Neal Armstrong, and John Rudy (Chairperson)

The Audit Committee was active throughout Calendar Year 2024 with its objective to provide an independent assessment of the church and school finances, controls and operations. To facilitate this, the committee performed some independent testing activities, but also focused on complying with the triennial requirement to engage a qualified audit firm to conduct an annual independent control review.

Committee activities performed in 2024 included:

- Reviewed the unaudited internally prepared financial statements for the Fiscal Year ended 6/30/24
- Performed an independent review of the 2022 Employee Retention Credit (ERC) application, a residual pandemic program providing reimbursement to qualifying businesses and tax-exempt organizations. Grace received approximately \$580,000 total refunds net of third-party fees. The review found no areas of concern.
- Capin Crouse LLP was engaged to perform an Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP) report to comply with our independent external review every three years (see details below). Capin Crouse is a regional accounting firm specializing in non-profit organizations.

After careful consideration of alternatives, the committee engaged Capin Crouse to conduct an AUP process and provide a report of their findings in accordance with AICPA (American Institute of Certified Public Accountants) standards. This process provided external independent testing of an expanded list of procedures identified by the committee. This targeted approach provides more meaningful and cost effective governance than a traditional external audit report.

The report conducted by Capin Crouse provided independent confirmation that sound and reliable financial practices are in place at Grace. No exceptions were noted in the procedures tested, with only an immaterial finding related to the Endowment Committee investment policy which is being addressed through a policy update that was coincidentally already in process.

Conclusions: Based on independent audit work performed by the committee and the independent AUP report, the books and records of Grace appear to be materially accurate in all respects. Overall controls governing financial operations appear to be in place and operating as intended

Respectfully submitted,

John T. Rudy  
*Chairperson*

**BALLOT**

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

OR

			YES	NO
<b>Officers of the Congregation</b>				
Vice President	John Rudy	2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Secretary	Gwen Gotsch	2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assistant Treasurer	Neal Armstrong	2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Board of Spiritual Life</b>				
	Daniel Lehmann	3 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Mark Bouman	3 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Board of Discipleship</b>				
	Linda Street (Council Rep)	2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Heidi Hamernik	3 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Board of Finance and Property</b>				
	Elizabeth Thompson (Council Rep)	2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Tom Thomas	3 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

