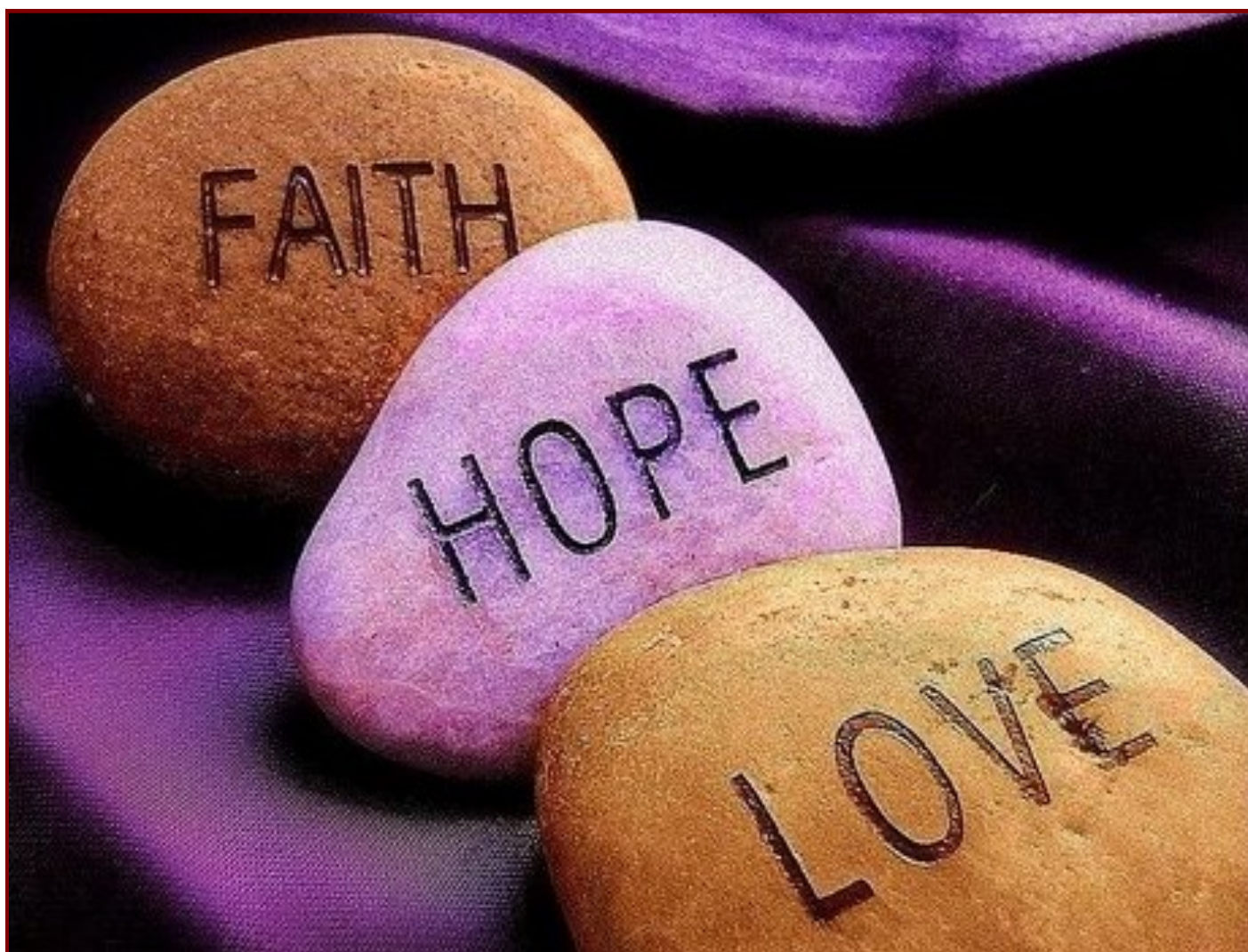


Grace Lutheran Church

2020 Annual Ministry Report



May, 2021

Senior Pastor's Report

The Reverend Joanna Mitchell

Dear People of Grace,

I have a vision of our church being a hub, a center point from where we are all sent out into the world to live out our mission and vision. In some ways, this past year has felt as though the opposite is true- that somehow it is a reverse hub - that you are all out in the world doing the good work of God and slowly returning to the "mothership." Each weekend when new people come into our church for the first time in over a year, or for the first time ever, it feels as if you have all been away at school and I have been longing for you to come home. I am grateful that some of us have been able to gather in person to worship together. I am grateful that those who are not vaccinated or who don't feel comfortable with in-person worship are still connected to us through our online worship and other activities. Or if nothing else, you are keeping up through our newsletter or weekly e-blasts. I want you to know that for those people I have not seen or talked to lately, that you are missed and prayed for by the staff at Grace, and by me. I hope you continue to pray for us.

I have described the church during this pandemic as being like a ship that had been cruising along on the river for a long time, and we knew what we were doing. We had our work in gear and we would just move from port to port without thinking about things. And then COVID hit and it felt as if, we docked the ship, turned off the motor, fired the crew and dismantled the ship itself. Now as we see hope on the horizon with the pandemic, we are trying to put the pieces back together and we don't really know what goes where or how. Some things have adapted more easily than others. For example: starting an online Zoom Bible study or prayer gathering after church was simple and quick to start



quick to start up. However, things like Holy Communion, a sacrament of our faith in which we are fed by God with love and forgiveness, has become all the more complex. But we are learning and growing, and discovering new ways to do things.

Over this past year, due to your generosity, we were able to purchase new video cameras and new equipment to improve our digital worship. We are now streaming each weekend and able to archive those worship services for later, so people can worship when it is convenient for them, or at the same time as us from home. I am so grateful. Thank you to Jonathan Orwig for leading us in this pursuit, and to Brent Schlosser and his family for helping us with the installation. Thank you to Chris Behnke-Nead for his willingness to learn and tweak until we figured out how to stream consistently and better.

Our staff has gone through some big transitions again. We said goodbye to Pastor Hahn, Tom Baker and Jonathan Orwig over the past 6 months. I am grateful for their ministry with and among us on our staff, and for all the ways they inspired faith in others.

We also made the big decision in January to sell the Nightingale property. Our building task force has been busy working on selling the land, as well as interviewing architects and listening to your hopes and dreams for our building on Round Lake Boulevard. Just today, (April 29th) we met for the first time with Kevin Busch and his team from Busch Architects who will be leading us forward.

During Lent we spent time exploring our values as a congregation. These values will be paramount in shaping our mission and vision of what we need to do next, in our call to share the good news of God's love with the world around us. Our values state that we, as a community of faith are inspired by Christ to: accept everyone, care compassionately, deepen connections and share God's love. I hope you will dream with me about ways we can do this better through our worship, education and service with each other, and in in the community.

Finally, this past year has been a difficult one for our entire world, and in particular for the state of Minnesota. All eyes were on us because of the death of George Floyd and the Derek Chauvin trial. Protests about race were happening in our backyard, and our communities have felt the disruption. I want you to know that we are listening. We are listening to the voices of our brothers and sisters of color who are telling us there is a problem in our state and in our country. We are listening to the younger generation who are inviting us to recognize the sin of racism. We are listening to our law enforcement and their families who are telling us that they are hurting. We are listening to Jesus who tells us that anyone who has ears to hear needs to listen. Who are you listening to, people of Grace?

Are you listening to God? Are you listening to people who look and think like you? Or are you listening to people with a different experience? Are you listening to people ready to debate, or with an open heart and mind? As you listen, I invite you to read through the Gospel of Luke again and notice how Jesus is almost always listening to two different voices- the voices of the powerful, and the voice of the oppressed. He is listening to the pain of the world and paying attention. His witness for us calls us to be people who are present in the world and living out our faith by paying attention to the cries of the people, both within our community and beyond it. This will be the hard work that is in front of us, because God does not ignore the cries of God's hurting people. God listens, responds and acts in order to bring people to freedom, even when it takes 40 years of wandering in the desert to get there.

Please know that one of the things I treasure about our community is that we can allow different perspectives to exist side by side. We are not of one mind and one spirit, but we are one in Christ. I pray that that may be enough to keep us listening, loving and caring for each other.

Thank you for the many and various ways you serve in our community and you live out your faith. I am grateful for you!

Pastor Joanna Mitchell



Associate Pastor's Report

The Reverend Maria Markman

People of Grace,

A few months ago, I was watching Saturday Night Live. The creators developed a skit where a group of friends went to see a psychic, Madame Vivelda. As the scene develops the psychic was clearly describing the COVID-19 pandemic: a couple moved in together, the man washing a bag of Doritos with soap and his partner yelling from across the room, "You need to use more soap! I don't want to get IT from a bag of chips!" The next reading foretells a year of coloring -no concerts, no museums, ONLY coloring. The next, a road trip to Kentucky instead of Paris. Another, a friendship ruined over eating inside a restaurant. Her fortunes seem so outlandish to the group, but to those of us in the midst of the pandemic, the scene was hilarious because Madame Vivelda described things we had all experienced.

Looking back on the year we have had, how many things have shocked you about our lives together. Communion at home, church in your pajamas, Christmas worship outside... in MINNESOTA! Never in my wildest imagination would I have thought my first call as an ordained pastor would look like the year we have had. I am a little worried I will not be able to recognize you all without masks on. I may need to look only at your eyes to recognize you in the future. I did, however, think that my first year in ministry would be full of learning, challenges, and trying new things. I knew that I would be preaching and teaching and presiding over the sacraments. I knew that I would feel loved and supported by all of you. So first, thank you from the bottom of my heart for calling me to be Associate Pastor of Faith



Formation here at Grace. To walk alongside you, to minister with you in Andover and beyond, and for supporting my ministry in many and various ways.

When I think back through the year that we have had, I give thanks for all of the things we said yes to, all of the things we could do. People of Grace, you called a pastor in the midst of a pandemic! Many of you came to support my ordination into word and sacrament ministry! Thank you, it meant the world to me that you were there. And with that, we transitioned as a church from having a Children's Ministry Director to having an Associate Pastor and Children's Ministry Team. Spending the summer in outdoor worship together, and in the fall, Sunday School began outdoors too, and families and kids grew in faith together. Adults of all ages joined in small groups, some focused more on learning (memoir, nonviolent communication, wow groups, and bible study), while others enjoyed more fellowship (centering prayer, worship and music, caroling, Men's ministry, social devotions), all integral to our mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being in the midst of a global pandemic.

A great joy of mine this year was not only the time I got to spend outdoors myself, but the time we spent outdoors together—God’s Work, Our Hands, Oktoberfest, All Saints Luminary Event, Christmas Eve Worship, and Easter Sunday outdoor worship. In a year where we could have easily said no, many of us said yes, tried new things and became closer because of the experiences we shared together. I will never forget my first Christmas and Easter as an ordained pastor because of the experiences we hold together.

It is my hope that as we move forward in our ministry together, that our answers will continue to be “yes, what can we do!” God’s spirit will continue to live and move and breathe life into God’s people and into this place! And if we dare to say YES! Maybe once again or even time and again, God will continue to do Grace and Peace,

Pastor Maria Markman



Vision Board President's Report



Chad Hadler
Vision Board President

As I look back over the last year, I am amazed at the ways our congregation has adapted to change. Together we have weathered a global pandemic, and all the changes that it forced us to embrace. Praise God we see a light at the end of that tunnel! We have experienced changes to our church staff and congregational make-up, while maintaining and growing our outreach into the community. We have embraced and discussed difficult topics as a response to God's call to know and love our neighbor better. God has led us to and through so much change this past year, and through it all God reminds us that "Jesus is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

Change will be a continuing theme in the coming year as we explore options and build our church. After the January 2021 congregational vote resulted in the decision to sell the Nightingale property and renovate the current property, the Building Task Force committee and church staff have been working with an architect who will guide us through the renovation process. Congregational input has been so helpful thus far, and I encourage anyone who has any ideas, to share those through the portal on the church website. I also ask that we all pray for those most closely involved in this process as we move toward the goal of making our physical space accessible and welcoming to all.

Renovating our physical space is only one aspect of the change God will guide us through as our congregation moves forward. The global pandemic has required us to change how we worship, how worship looks in the building, and how we experience fellowship together. While some of us may feel the impacts of the pandemic for some time to come, we can see a light at the end of the tunnel. The staff, Vision Board, and Reopen team request your prayers as they assess and make changes to the protocol that were implemented to keep us each safe and healthy during this unprecedented time.

During today's annual meeting we will vote for three new Vision Board members; each candidate has prayerfully considered serving our church, and I am excited for the new ideas and perspectives they will bring to their roles. This time of change within our congregational leadership reminds me that change is an opportunity for growth. In Ecclesiastes 3, we are reminded that "there is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens" (3:1), and that "[God] has made everything beautiful in its time" (3:11). Let us continue to pray with open hearts for God's guidance as we move into an exciting year for change and growth in our congregation, so that we may find the beauty in God's timing.

Chad M. Hadler
Vision Board President

Program Staff's Reports

Faith Formation—Children's Ministry

Transition may be just the word for the season we are in as a congregation. It is also a word for Children's Ministry. Our Children's Ministry Director, Maria Markman transitioned this year from her position as Children's Ministry Director to Grace's Associate Pastor of Faith Formation. In this transition, the Children's Ministry team has come alongside Pastor Maria to ensure Grace continues to offer meaningful faith formation ministry for our parents and children. Not only a year of transition, but 2020 was a year of trying new things. Some of the new things we tried found great success, while others were simply learning experiences.



Faith Formation—Sunday School

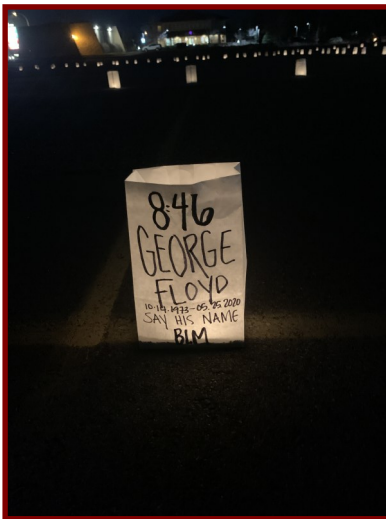
Sunday School continued virtually throughout the year and when as a congregation we transitioned to in-person worship, Sunday School followed suit. Our dedicated volunteers devoted time and energy to connecting with kids and their families at Sunday School and through other special events and phone calls throughout the year. While Sunday School was held during the break between worship services, we hope as our world transitions, we will be able to return to Sunday School during worship as a way to support parents. This poses a few challenges in the coming year. We will need more volunteers in order to have two successful hours of Sunday School each week, and we would also like to see children's involvement in worship continue to grow and expand.

Faith Formation—Intergenerational & Adult Ministry

Small groups- In the fall of 2020, we began a small group initiative born out of needs in our community for connection and learning. With a few brave and courageous leaders, we had 6 weeks of conversation and connection through small groups like worship and music in the parking lot, Non-Violent Communication Book Study, Conversations on Mental Health and the church, life moments through memoir, and a couple that continued beyond the 6 week time frame, young adult meet up and centering prayer. Centering prayer continues to this day.

All Saints Luminary Event- A very meaningful celebration in the church year to take the time and remember those we have lost in the previous year, was made all the more meaningful as participants made luminaries for their loved ones, and then drove through the lit path while listening to a service designed by area churches for the event. Those who attended encouraged staff to continue this event in the future.

Caroling- As a way to bring Christmas cheer to those we hadn't been able to see in-person due to COVID, many piled in their cars and caravanned from home to home singing familiar Christmas carols for all to hear! Another event, that because of COVID and thinking outside of the box, we were able to do and hope to continue into the future because we had so much fun!



Faith Formation—Special Events

2020 Summer Evening Bible Camp was a success. Children participated both in-person (outside) and online. We partnered with Luther Crest Bible Camp for content throughout the week. They provided lessons and worship as well as supplies for crafts and games. Our volunteers helped provide a safe and engaging place for kids to come and learn more about God.

Children's Involvement in Worship- both during Advent and Easter Seasons, our children came together and offered their acting talents in telling the Christmas and Easter stories. Our Christmas program was a joint effort between the Music Ministry of Grace and Children's Ministry. *"Do Not Be Afraid"* was a hit for families at Grace and beyond. A special thanks to Illustrated Ministry for their script and engaging illustrated backgrounds. For Easter, our kids again brought the message of *"Good News"* to our congregation through video! How fun to hear the good news on the lips of our children!

Trunk or Treat- Given the pandemic, we expected a lower turn out for Trunk or Treat and much to our surprise we saw just as many children and families drive through our decorated trunks. Sunday School teachers and Children's Ministry volunteers, catechism students and volunteers, families and even Pastor Maria, decorated their trunks for an interactive and safe drive-thru experience. Something we may want to consider continuing in the future, especially for those COLD Halloween nights!

Oktoberfest, God's Work Our Hands, Advent Wreath, Eggstravaganza and Resurrection Garden in-person/ pick-up kit events- Events Children's ministry has supported for years continued in new and various ways throughout our pandemic year. Families and volunteers alike were happy to celebrate and serve in these ways this year.

Family Sunday School- Communion with Pastor Joanna, The Church Year with Pastor Maria

Other online parties and gatherings - Pastor Maria hosted multiple events throughout the year through ZOOM, dance parties, Bingo nights, movie nights, an Epiphany party and Valentine's celebration. Although lightly attended those who came had a great time of fellowship and fun!







OK@PLAY

OK@PLAY (Old Kids at PLAY) is a fellowship group for retired, nearly retired, or just plain tired members and friends of Grace. This group was created in 2017 and continues to meet for fun and laughter. We usually plan events during the day or in the evenings on both weekdays and weekends to accommodate different schedules. People decide what they are interested in attending according to their availability and cost. This is NOT a “members only” group; ALL are welcome! This year, due to COVID, we have met primarily via Zoom once a month. Starting in December, we have been *Zooming Through Covid* with the following events: Reconnection social and planning time; Show and Tell; Re-tired Trivia Night; Watched and discussed the movie *Risen*; and Comedy Night and Scattergories. The next event will be an In-Person picnic gathering! Come join the fun!

For questions, contact Ann Lange, Deb Stang or Mary Jo Trapp.



Youth Ministries

This is the 6th time I have written an annual report at Grace Lutheran, and each year I fondly recall the great things our young people have done, and how God has revealed God's self in their lives. Those annual reports were filled with the energy of the previous year and hope for looking forward. Normally, I spend the time I write thinking of memories from traveling, Summer Stretch, small group nights, events and special occasions. Before I write I look over photos of smiling students with their arms around each other or piled in vans or singing at Okoboji. This year, there is very little of that.

If I'm being honest, young people's mental health and their moods struggled this year alongside of the rest of us. There were times when I could sense a great sadness and pain in them as they absorbed the weight of a pandemic, civil unrest, an unusual school year, a divisive election and more. The stress felt was not only from the fear of COVID-19, but also from transitions, change and uncertainty. As a church, we worried about each other, and we worried about our youth. I would love to write an annual report that says that young people are thriving; but it would be an incomplete and inaccurate picture. It has been a difficult year for everyone, and youth are not exempt from that.

But I promise you it is not all doom and gloom because God does not abandon God's people. Old or young. Ever. Amongst the discomfort we have had wonderful and meaningful moments. Traditions like Confirmation looked different, but the Holy Spirit was present as students confirmed their belief in God the Creator, Son and Spirit.



New needs emerged in our community, and our youth responded. ACBC put out a call for more volunteers and ever since our youth have volunteered during their weekly independent learning days. We asked students to be flexible, stay socially distant and wear masks during Catechism so we could meet in person, and they did it with very little complaining. I am so proud of how they have rolled with the punches and found ways to stay connected and engaged. Last summer, High School students enjoyed various events in person and over Zoom such as learning to paint, a bonfire, Zoom teatime, a scavenger hunt and more. In the fall, we started each week with a campfire brunch in the courtyard at church where we cooked breakfast burritos and more over the fire, heard a devotion and visited with coffee and cocoa. This winter we resumed weekly youth nights and have spent the last several months embracing, understanding and destigmatizing mental health, stress and anxiety.

Middle School students win the award for being most flexible along with their many small group leaders and adult volunteers. Because of COVID precautions we sometimes needed to change the format of Catechism on a weekly basis and students, parents and leaders did a wonderful job of rolling with the punches. Thank you to everyone that made this year a success.

And it wouldn't be right for me to close this annual report without mentioning the retirement of one of the greatest people I have ever had the pleasure of working with, Tom Baker. After more than a couple decades of ministry, 12 of which were at Grace, our beloved TBakes hung up his van keys so he could retire to spend more time with his family. I have enjoyed my years working with Tom. He has taught me a lot about trusting God, how to live life generously, and what it means to have faith. I miss him daily, (particularly when I need to do something he would normally magically take care of) but I am happy he is embracing life and I am excited to see where the Spirit leads him.

It was a difficult year as I watched our youth, our staff, our world and myself spend time in the shadows. But the light of Christ means we can't stay there for long. I for one, am excited to see how God will be at work at Grace during the next program year. I look forward to our High School trip to Montana and hearing stories from our middle school students at camp. I hope we can spend time together this summer and learning together next fall. Until then, I invite you to continue to pray that the young people at Grace and in our community will feel God's presence when they are in the shadows and when they can feel the light.

Humbly,

Kristi Larson
Director of Youth and Family Ministries



Administrative Ministries

A special thank you to you, our fabulous volunteers who serve tirelessly in so many, many areas, as we reach out to love to serve our neighbors. You are truly a blessing, and we couldn't do what we do here at Grace without your kindness, love and support.

This past more than a year has been a difficult one for all as we have been dealing with the Covid 19 Pandemic. We have seen our church close and move to virtual worship, then to outdoor worship and back to in person worship. Almost all of our meetings took place via Zoom. And through it all you were there for us and stayed faithful. We are especially thankful for all the ways you have adapted and continued to support our church and our staff during these very difficult days, weeks and months.

We look forward to watching God's plan for Grace unfolding in the days and months ahead, and we pray for God's continued guidance that gives us hope for the future. **THANK YOU!**

Kris Miller

Administrative & Pastoral Care Assistant



Administration

What a year this has been! It seems like it was only yesterday when I joined the Grace Team as your Church Administrator. In this past year, we have gone through a lot, but through it all, we have **experienced Grace**. We have embraced creativity in communications, worshipping and connecting. We have become proficient users of Zoom and bought facial masks to be a fashion statement. Thank you to all who have continued to support Grace with your talents, time and gifts. I enjoy meeting each of our ministry leaders and members and catch up with their next project! Over the past year we were able to request and receive forgiveness for the PPP loan we received from the Small Business Administration. This loan helped cover payroll expenses, especially for the Day Care during the tough months following the onset of COVID-19. Our team continues to work diligently to assure compliance with planning and safety through our re-open phases and we appreciate the grace you continue to grant us while we try these new ways. We have placed plexiglass partitions in our administrative office area, as well as our Welcome Desk in the Narthex. We added signage throughout the building, as well as upgraded our drinking fountains to touchless systems to help reduce the risk of infection, and in following safety recommendations. We successfully received a grant from Anoka County to replace our kitchen sanitizer to a commercial grade dishwasher/sanitizer that has improved not only the safety by assuring proper cleaning and sanitizing, but has improved productivity for the Golden Rule day care team members. We successfully transitioned our database platform to Realm and we encourage you to use the app to communicate with us, your teams and other congregation members! Our website took on a whole new look and we continue to seek ways to improve it to better communicate the "what's happenings" at Grace.

Our Building Committee began meeting in the fall to begin the ground-work of planning meetings, interviewing architects and presenting options to our Congregation regarding our properties. We are excited to continue this work as we discern together our future space needs for our ministries. So excited for what the future will bring for our faith community! Thank you for the opportunity to serve!

Blessings,
Frances Fernandez
Church Administrator



Altar Guild

With the reopening of the Worship Center and having Communion on the first and third Sundays, Altar Guild has restarted in a limited capacity. In preparation for the reopening, Pastor Joanna and others have gone through the Sacristy to reor-



ganize and refresh the area. The procedures have been updated to comply with COVID-19 protocols, new Communion trays for the wine are now in place and white grape juice is now

being used so it is easier to distinguish from the Communion wine. New and familiar faces are now volunteering in Altar Guild on Communion Sundays, there is always room for more! It is wonderful to have the beautiful sacrament of Communion back into worship.

Marie Kolar

Communications / Bookkeeper

Building Task Force

Quite a bit of progress has been made since we last reported. Highlights include the securing of a realtor to market the Nightingale property, which has resulted in a pending sale, the interviewing of, and eventual settlement on an architectural firm, and the beginning of the process of collecting input of the expectations the congregation has for functionality and appearance of our final build.

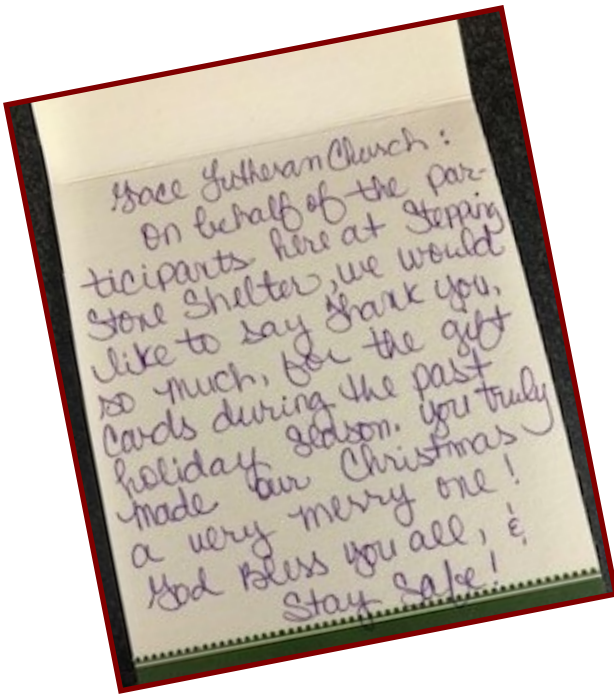
Truly, this shall be challenging, but exciting times as we move forward in the building process. As mentioned, we have begun collecting input from the congregation, but expect more as the architect intends to engage in the process with us. Different user groups will be asked for their input as to what building changes could enhance their function. Expect to hear more of this in the near future.

Another closely related effort is underway to enhance our presence on the corner of Round Lake and Bunker Lake Boulevards. A group is meeting to arrange for new signage, including a changeable message sign. We want to communicate to the community what we are doing, and invite them to share with us the love of Christ through Grace!

Charlie Wold



Outreach Ministries



Stepping Stone Emergency Housing

Stepping Stone is an emergency shelter in Anoka for single, homeless adults, 18 years and older. Stepping Stone has the capacity to house 66 residents and always has hundreds of people on their waiting list. Along with housing, they also provide mentoring and life skills training for their residents as they strive towards self-sufficiency. Our team of 7 provides pickup and delivery of food from the Andover Pizza Ranch to Stepping Stone every Friday afternoon. For Christmas this year, the generous people of Grace provided **89** Target and Walmart gift cards worth \$25.00 each! The gift cards were placed into Christmas cards with a message from Grace of our prayers and support for each resident at Stepping Stone; the extra gift cards are being used for new residents as they move into Stepping Stone.

Ann Lange, Team Leader

Family Promise

We're proud to partner with @FamilyPromiseinAnoka! Family Promise is the only local nonprofit that helps families with young children secure housing independence.

In 2020, 41 children in Anoka County were provided safe shelter and warm hospitality through the Family Promise shelter program.

The faithful volunteers of Grace Lutheran Church extended hospitality to our neighbors in need by:

- Providing much-needed nonperishable food, gift cards and hot meals to 14 families living in extended stay hotels.
- Adopting a family for Christmas and sharing gifts of needed items, gift cards and treats.
- Donating gently used and new household items to families as they moved into their new homes.

Grace volunteers have also given of their time and talents during the extreme makeover of the Family Promise Day Center in Ramsey.

Alden Riley, Team Leader

May All Be Fed (Grace's) Food Shelf

The people of Grace have supported our emergency food shelf by donating food, stocking the shelves, pre-bagging groceries, and providing financial gifts. Those who utilize our food shelf are so grateful! Thank you for your generosity and for the love you have shown by helping to ensure that our neighbors do not go hungry!

Michelle Behnke-Nead, Team Leader

Faith & Community Partnership with Sand Creek Elementary

Our partnership with Sand Creek, even during Covid, has been filled with many areas of support throughout the school year! Help has been given to the students and families in need, and appreciation to the Sand Creek staff. Each member of our team provides a leadership role to the special projects. Throughout this year our outreach included the following:

School supplies were collected for Sand Creek students, and monetary donations of \$730 were used for the Sharing Grace Food Bags for backpack meal expenses.

In July, Grace collected \$300, and an anonymous donor gave \$500 to help the Wieden family. Randy Wieden (husband of Sand Creek staff member Kari Wieden) had suffered a terrible fall from his roof which resulted in a long recovery.

A hat and mittens drive for the students was held from November to January.

Sharing Grace Backpack Meals were provided this year while in-person school was in session for an average of 10-15 students each week. We buy and pack our own balanced meals of nonperishable food to provide more food at a cheaper cost, and the students and families are very happy with the food provided!

Holiday Food Baskets for 10 families were provided for Thanksgiving and Spring Break. For Christmas and Easter, \$50 gift cards from Walmart and Aldi were given to 10 families at Christmas and 15 families at Easter.

Adopt A Family at Christmas for 11 families. Specific Grace families adopted the Sand Creek families, but this year various gift cards were given rather than gifts due to Covid.

Staff Appreciation encouraging notes with treats for Sand Creek staff (85) was provided every other month.

In June, we will provide a year-end staff appreciation lunch, consisting of sub sandwiches, chips, and homemade cookies/bars.

Noisy offerings, benevolence funding from Grace, and special donations were divided between the "Little Bit of Grace" emergency fund at Sand Creek, and our Sand Creek budget at Grace to help provide for our donations listed above.

Ann Lange, Team Leader



Grace 4 Rakai

Grace4Rakai Ministry at Grace continues to provide critical support for many ACT (African Children Today) outreach ministries in Rakai, Uganda. The global COVID-19 pandemic that affected all of us this past year had a profound impact on Rakai. With schools, markets, and most businesses closed, there was a chronic shortage of food. ACT created food boxes containing rice, maize flour, other staples, and seed packets with enough food in each box to feed a family of eight for one month. The Grace community generously provided more than \$7,000 to help hundreds of people avoid starvation through these food boxes. The pandemic also caused malaria to spike and we were able to provide vulnerable women and children much needed malaria medication.

Although schools were closed, the teachers at the **ACT Junior School** prepared lesson packets that were delivered to children in their homes so they could continue learning. The children sponsored by the Grace community and their families continued to receive food, medicine and other support throughout the pandemic.

Seventh and eleventh graders returned to school in October so they could begin preparations to take national exams in April. As of this writing, the schools are in the process of re-opening and welcoming students of all age groups back to school. The Grace4Rakai Ministry Team has established a scholarship fund to provide financial support as needed for children sponsored by the Grace community.

The medical clinic located in the ACT Junior School has expanded service to the Rakai community; it is treating expectant mothers and has opened a new pharmacy stocked with basic medicines. The Grace community helped to purchase an ultrasound for the clinic and to stock the pharmacy with needed medicines.

The Amazing Grace Bakery continues to operate 24/7 and has continued to supply the Rakai community with much needed bread throughout the pandemic. A new milling operation that opened just before the pandemic developed the maize flour that was essential to providing the food boxes earlier in 2020.

Despite an extremely challenging year brought on by the global pandemic, the people of Rakai have again shown their resiliency in adapting to rapidly changing conditions and they continue to survive these difficult conditions. The many children sponsored by the Grace community are starting a new school year; they are looking forward to seeing their teachers again back in the classroom!

Scott Christensen and Stacy Surratt, Team Leaders



Grace 2 Haiti



2020 has been a tough year for our ministry in Haiti. As with all things this year, COVID has prevented us from traveling to visit our friends. However, due to the diligence and dedication of the Worldwide Village staff, our programs have continued on in our absence.

We have hired a new Mid-wife to bring our “Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies” program to life. She has begun classes to help educate local birth attendants and has already delivered 2 babies in the clinic.

We continue to support the Abandoned Kids each month.

The Sewing Center is now doubling as a food distribution center for sponsored school children.

We now have three community wells that have been dug by Worldwide Village, two in Williamson and one in Luly.

We have also provided solar power to all three of the community wells. This is a huge blessing as we no longer need to buy gasoline for the generators.

We are starting to plan a trip back to Haiti in 2022. This will be the 10th anniversary of Grace’s first trip to Haiti, so it will be a special celebration! If you’re interested in learning more or possibly joining us, please contact Lori Ackerson or Stacy Lenz.

Most of all, we ask for your continued prayers for the safety, prosperity and health of our Haitian brothers and sisters!

Lori & Greg Ackerson and Stacy Lenz, Team Leaders

Our Saviour’s Housing

Our Saviour’s Emergency Shelter in south Minneapolis serves homeless adults (age 18+) who are in immediate need of a safe place to sleep at night. The Shelter provides a bed, hot dinner, and supportive resources to 34 men and 6 women every night of the year. Grace Lutheran Church helps by providing and serving a hot meal to our homeless brothers and sisters on the first Monday of every other month.

During the last year, because of COVID-19, the guests of Our Saviour’s were housed in a motel and outside meals weren’t allowed. They are now transitioning back to the Our Saviour’s building and we will begin providing meals again in August. If you would like to be a part of this ministry by either preparing and/or donating food, or joining us as we serve our meals, please contact Dave or Mary Jo Trapp.

Mary Jo and Dave Trapp, Team Leaders

Family Table

For over 25 years, Grace has welcomed anyone in the community to come to the Family Table, held at Grace on the third Sunday of every month. Two major changes took place with this ministry in 2020. First, because of COVID, we had to suspend the program for several months beginning in April. Second, in August, Lynda Wilde stepped up to lead this ministry as a “drive-up meal” until it is safe to open our doors to guests again.

Last August we had just 14 people who came by to pick up a meal. But for the past two months, we’ve had over 50 guests! There are many ways to be involved in this ministry, from providing food to packing meals to bringing the meals out to our guests as they pull up in our parking lot. What a joy and privilege to provide a meal for those in need!

Lynda Wilde, Team Leader

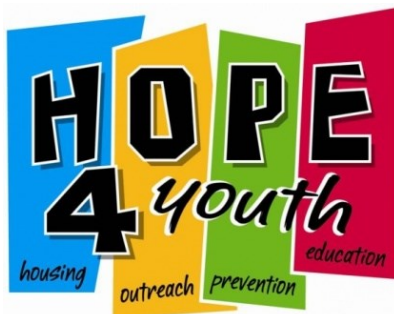
Feed My Starving Children

For years, Grace has helped feed hungry children across the world through its financial contributions to Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) and by packing meals that are shipped to children whose very lives depend on this food. However, because of the pandemic, FMSC had to close its doors to volunteers for many months. It recently re-opened with safety guidelines in place and is welcoming people to come back and pack meals! Please go to fmsc.org to learn more.



HOPE 4 Youth

HOPE 4 Youth is a Minnesota nonprofit that meets the basic needs of young people (age 23 and under) in our community who are experiencing homelessness. Grace has been a partner with this organization since its founding in 2013 and has supported it through financial gifts, donating clothes, providing personal care items, cooking meals, and helping at the Center in a variety of ways. Thank you for your generous and ongoing support for HOPE 4 Youth! Contact Jan Anderson to learn more.



Grace Quilters

The Grace Quilters, led by Low Jackson, suspended meeting because of COVID, but we're back! We meet Monday mornings from 9 AM to noon. Quilts are given to the newly baptized at Grace, Haven for Heroes (homeless veterans and their families), Anoka County Foster Care, HOPE 4 Youth, Stepping Stone Emergency Shelter, infants of teen moms and community needs that arise.

Thank you to Grace members and friends who have donated fabric and sheets for quilt backs! During the pandemic, many quilt tops were made and some quilts were assembled at home and delivered to charities. In addition, 21 large bags were made for Family Promise by the Quilters and members of the congregation. These heavy duty bags are used to carry food for the families, and the families keep the bags for their own use. Thank you to all who provided the heavy weight fabrics that made these bags possible!

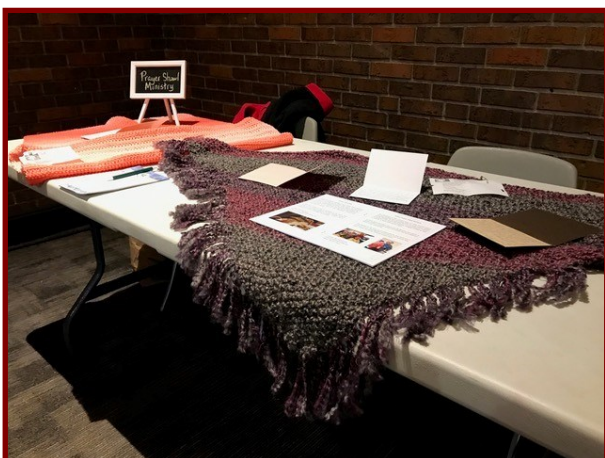


Grace Quilters 2, led by Jan Margotto, meets one Monday evening each month. More than 200 quilts have been sent to the precious children of Rakai. Even though we suspended gathering during COVID-19 this past year, we have about 50 quilts ready to go because some of our participants worked at home. Generosity and boredom (and the Holy Spirit) inspired them.

Grace Quilters 3, also led by Jan Margotto, meets one Tuesday morning each month to tie quilts for the children of Rakai and for local entities, including Anoka Foster Care and Alexandra's House. Grace Quilters 2 and 3 are excited to begin gathering again at Grace in June.

Low Jackson, Team Leader

Prayer Shawl Ministry



This ministry team uses their creative talents to make prayer shawls and lap blankets for people who are ill, hospitalized, or homebound. Because of COVID, this group has not met for over a year. Nevertheless, individuals on the team have continued making prayer shawls and delivering them to Mercy Hospital, Anoka Care Center, the Farmstead and others in the community who are in need of a little extra love and warmth.

Bev Jovanovich, Team Leader

Love of Grace Bazaar

Our 2020 Love of Grace Bazaar was cancelled due to COVID-19. We are pleased that we will be able to go ahead with our 2021 Bazaar on Saturday, November 13. It is a day when we fill our church with talented vendors selling their handmade crafts and food. Many shoppers attend, and we do our best to help them feel the Love of Grace when they enter our building. Funds raised at our most recent bazaars were donated to Robin's Nest Sewing School in Haiti and Sand Creek Elementary School to supply weekend meals for students in need. Please contact Mary Jo Trapp or Ann Lange if you would like to be a part of our Bazaar (sometimes Bizarre) team.

Mary Jo Trapp and Ann Lange, Team Leaders

Garden Ministry Team

Our dedicated team of green thumbs work diligently throughout the year to assure our property and gardens are beautiful year round. They weed, “round-up”, remove leaves—leaving no stone unturned to dig through and make sure every leaf is picked up. They mulch around 11 trees on the property, and get our beautiful flowers going each year. If you’re interested in becoming part of this great team, contact Joe Jackson.

Joe Jackson, Team Leader

G.R.A.M.P.S.

Our Graceful, Resourceful, Able, Members, Performing Service team is always at the ready to fix, build, paint and enjoy fellowship. After a brief hiatus due to COVID-19, they’re back at it with a full agenda! If you’re interested in joining this fun group, contact Dennis Grabowski or Joe Jackson. They meet the third Thursday of the month for coffee, donuts and jokes before getting ready to take care of our building. We are so very grateful for their gifts shared with Grace!

Dennis Grabowski and Joe Jackson, Team Leaders





Mental Health Ministry

Recognizing the impact of the pandemic on mental health, this past year the Mental Health Team hosted several events on Zoom and most recently two in-person sessions.

Last fall we facilitated a 6-week discussion group of the book, "Whispers in the Pews."

We presented two sessions on the topic of Self-Care: one focused on self-care during the holidays, and the other focused on tips for general self-care and was aimed at middle school students and their parents.

There were three weekends when our worship (liturgy, sermons, prayers, and songs) focused on mental health.

This spring leaders of our team presented to Mental Health Connect and Nativity Lutheran Church about our efforts at Grace regarding mental health.

Most recently Chris Shaw of *The Heart & Mind Connection* presented two in-person sessions at Grace: "Mental Health 101" and "QPR" (Question, Persuade, Refer), a suicide prevention class.

Several members of our team wrote devotions based on their personal journeys, and these were shared on Grace's website and Facebook page.

This fall we hope to facilitate another book discussion group. In addition, Dr. Henry Emmons of "Partners in Resilience" will be presenting at Grace on October 17. Three other churches are collaborating with us for this event.

Please continue to pray for our mental health ministry at Grace.

Nancy Jenkins, Team Leader





Adult Education

The Adult Education Team (formerly called SALT) had a change in leadership (thank you to John Anderson for your 4.5 years as our leader), re-visited our team's purpose statement, added three new members (welcome Bekah Hirt, Daron Yates and Mike Schaaf!), and decided to focus our efforts on social justice, specifically expanding our "lens" to include a wider and more inclusive view of the world around us. Last fall, John Anderson led a 6-week class on "Nonviolent Communication", which is also referred to as "compassionate communication". This

spring the Adult Education Team continued the "Conversations on Race" that Pastor Joanna started last summer following the death of George Floyd. Now called "Conversations on Race and Culture", these monthly discussions have focused on the ELCA Social Justice Statement, Asian Americans / Pacific Islanders, and PRIDE and our evolving language. To grow in our understanding of our Indigenous brothers and sisters, in May a group from Grace participated in the "Sacred Sites Tour" led by Reverend Jim Bear Jacobs. In addition, several team members wrote devotions that were shared throughout the year on the Grace website and Facebook page.

Nancy Jenkins, Team Leader



WOW 2020-2021 Recap

The Women On Wednesday (WOW) year has officially come to a close. This past year we were very fortunate to have enough facilitators to have 5 groups. This meant that all of our groups were under 10 people, which seemed to be a wonderful gift for all. 41 women participated. The groups were enriched by 8 women who are members of other churches in the surrounding area. As with every other aspect of life, WOW looked totally different this year. 4 of the 5 groups met on Zoom exclusively and one group met in person at church except during the height of the spike in Covid 19 cases when the church needed to limit access. While there was much that was missed from our previous WOW seasons, (the amazing WOW treats, the hugs, the noisy laughter in the halls of Grace), the spirit of love and community that makes WOW what it is was present in full measure. All across Anoka County and beyond, computers were fired up every Wednesday morning. We all learned to struggle through the glitches of modern technology, and in spite of everything, women came together and engaged in prayer, in reading the Word of God, and in sharing life with each other. Our very homes were under the umbrella of Grace and the Presence of God. The 5 groups had very different books and subject matter, but when God invites us into a book, whatever it is, and into community, there is learning that happens. When asked what WOW has meant to them this past year, people responded in many ways. A couple of excerpts from some of the responses are as follows:

WOW has been my guiding light through the dark days of Covid. I was lifted spiritually by our book study and spiritually supported by the wonderful women in my group. Deb S

(WOW is) getting to know people more in depth and becoming friends for life, and even more importantly learning and knowing God through new studies...(N)o matter the topic or the group, you learn different perspectives and insights. It's the best time spent for 9 months out of the year with beautiful ladies! Ann L

In summary, we give God thanks and praise for another year of connection and learning. We are already praying for the women in our community to hear the call and feel the nudge to join us in Fall. We trust that the Spirit will continue to guide and direct us just as has been the reality for the past 20+ years of WOW at Grace.

Golden Rule



Child Care Center of Grace Lutheran Church
In the heart of Andover

God's Greetings from Golden Rule. As I think back on this last year, I feel incredibly thankful and blessed for my staff, the Golden Rule Board, and the wonderful people who work and worship at Grace Lutheran Church. Golden Rule has an incredibly talented and faith filled staff and we are thriving again. We have full classrooms, and we are blessed to be a part of the ministry here at Grace Lutheran Church. My Staff and I have had to be wonderfully and gracefully flexible this past year. We must follow the strict guidelines put out by the Department of Human Services, the CDC and the Department of Health. It has been a struggle at times, but with the Lord's help and my team here at Golden Rule, we all pulled together, edified each other, and gave each other grace. We are thankful to all our parents and families who have been great this past year, and very supportive!

This year has again had many ups and downs, but now that we have a vaccine, we can definitely see the light at the end of the tunnel. We have seen turmoil in our cities and have had to answer hard questions from very young people. We have wept and prayed over the things that have happened in our world, but we also continue to find happiness. We can see in our kiddos the sheer joy one can have in seeing a friend, completing a hard task, playing with chalk on the playground, and getting to have cookies for snack every Friday!

We are looking forward to having the parents back in the building and getting back to better times! We are also very excited about our summer program, and we are planning off-site and in house field trips, walks to the park and water days. We are excited for the new church expansion and our student enrollment growth.

I would like to leave you with two bible verses, the first one is probably said daily in the toddler room, and the second one I just love.

"This is the day the LORD has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!" Psalm 118:24

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight." Proverbs 3:5,6

God is Great!

Sandy Schmoll, Director Golden Rule Child Care Center

Personnel Committee

Grace has established a Personnel Committee to support the Senior Pastor with the human resources of the church. The committee meets regularly, as needed, when requested by Pastor Joanna. Committee membership includes:

Scott Christensen

Karen Bastian

Lynn Noren

Ann Lange, as the Vice President of the Vision Board

The Committee assists the Senior Pastor in reviewing Graces HR policies, staffing needs, position descriptions, and processes for the ongoing development, evaluation, and support for the church staff team. Members of the committee also perform exit interviews with any employee who is leaving the team. Our primary role is to provide support and counsel to the Senior Pastor, providing a confidential space for discussion and support.

Lynn Noren



Vision Board—Nominating Committee

First we want to give thanks to Carla Renner and Dave Trapp who have served on the Vision Board for the past three years.

The Vision Board appointed a Nominating Committee. This committee consisted of Scott Lien, Carla Renner, Tracie Russell, Dave Trapp, Anne Weikle and Pastor Joanna. The committee met via Zoom and prayerfully discerned who to ask to run for Vision Board. The nomination team looked at which members are actively involved and have demonstrated leadership characteristics needed to serve on the Vision Board. Nominations for candidates were also accepted from the congregation. The opening for Vision Board candidates was announced during church services, asking for volunteers to submit their names to run for Vision Board. It was also announced in Grace At A Glance. The list of candidates the Vision Board is presenting now for your vote is the result of the nominations process at Grace.

The following candidates are presented by the Grace Lutheran Church Nominating Committee to be elected for the open Vision Board positions to serve 3 year terms. The 2021 Vision Board Elections will be held during the 2021 May Congregational Meeting, which will be held on May 22nd and 23rd. Please pray for each of the following candidates:

Carl Chandler
Bill Hentges
Stacy Surratt
Anna Welle





Anna Welle

My name is Anna Welle, and I have been a member of Grace since 2009. I have lived in Andover for fifteen years, and I have two children. Jameson (14) is currently in catechism, and Mackenzie (11) will be joining catechism in the fall. We came to Grace not only because of the welcoming environment, but also because of the wonderful children's ministry and youth programs. In my professional life, I am a Vice President leading the Federal income tax function in the corporate tax department at Ameriprise Financial. I also serve as Treasurer for the Andover Girls' Traveling Basketball Association. I have served in a variety of ways over the years at Grace, from assisting with SONday School to ushering to baking communion bread. I currently serve on the Abandoned Children's Ministry, and I have been to Haiti twice on mission trips. I have formed wonderful friendships with people I have met at Grace. I want what is best for our church, so that others may also experience that type of connection. I want to see our church continue to thrive and grow. I would be honored to serve on the Vision Board, and I appreciate your consideration.



Carl Chandler

My wife Steph and I have been members of Grace since 2007. We have two children Audrey (11) and Logan (10). We found our home at Grace while searching for a church close to home and help us grow our spiritually. Grace has welcomed us with open arms. I'm a Service Center Manager for FedEx Freight and been with them for 20 years. We love to volunteer at FMSC and plan on more doing more as the pandemic allows. Thanks for your consideration!



Stacy Surratt

Hi, my name is Stacy Surratt and I have been a member of Grace since 2007. I live in Andover with my husband James and my two children, Olivia (16) and my son, Christopher (15) and our dog, Watson. I am a Health Systems Business Specialist for Boehringer Ingelheim where I call on hospitals and clinics in the Minneapolis metro area, helping healthcare professionals treat diabetes, COPD and heart failure. I love serving my community and the people at Grace Lutheran Church. I currently serve as the co-lead for the Grace4Rakai Ministry Team since the team was established in the summer of 2015. I was blessed to actually go to Rakai, Uganda in the summer of 2016 and experienced first-hand how our church is positively impacting vulnerable women and children in Africa. I was also on the Grace2Haiti team for several years and went to Haiti 2x with the Grace team as part of their mission trips. I also am very involved with the Children's Ministry at Grace for the past 14 years. I currently am a Sunday School teacher and serve as the leader for the Children's Ministry Team. I also have served as a leader on many children's events over the years including VBS, "Egg-stravaganza", "Trunk or Treat" as well as many other annual events offered each year. I am also actively involved in Women's Ministry here at Grace. I have served on their leadership team for many years and currently have led the Women's Retreat team for the past 8 years. I have also been on the Call Committee and several Nominating Committees over the years when hiring church staff. Me and my family love to serve together and volunteer at ACBC food shelf and FMSC on a regular basis. I would be honored to serve Grace as a Vision Board member. Thank you for your consideration.



Bill Hentges

Hello, my name is Bill Hentges and I, along with my wife Denise and daughter Katie (21), have lived in Andover since 1998 and have been members of Grace for over 20 years. I have also served as a member of the Grace ushering team for most of this time. I have been an independent businessman, running a small business for over 30 years and have worked on various industry, municipal and state agency planning and code development and training committees over the years. I believe this experience has helped me develop skills that would be valuable as a member of the Grace Vision Board. As a member of Grace, I have always been proud of the outreach and services Grace has provided not just for our own members but to the community, as a whole, along with the international missions and ministries it has sponsored and supported. If I am elected to serve on the Vision Board I will do my best to ensure our continued commitment to these values. Thank you for your consideration.

2020 Financial Meeting Minutes

Grace Lutheran Annual Winter Meeting

Grace Lutheran, Andover MN

January 31, 2021 9:43 am | Via Zoom Link

Presided: Chad Hadler, Recorder: David Trapp

Opening Prayer – Pastor Maria Markman

Review of 2020 – Chad Hadler

We celebrate your generosity. We celebrate our ministry together. We celebrate our children and youth. We celebrate staff: Thank you for your ministry, Kate Morphew, Pastor Delwayne Hahn and Tom Baker. Welcome to Pastor Maria Markman, as new associate pastor, Frances Fernandez and Marie Kolar.

2020 Finances – Frances Fernandez

Reviewed 2020 finances. Total contributions, Total operation revenues, PPP, bank reconciliations, expenses, administrative expenses, property investments, benevolence investments, total expenses and margin. No questions.

2021 Budget – Frances Fernandez

2021 budget presented. Questions concerning Operations and Capital Line Items expenditures. Keep them separate in presentations.

Property Review – Pastor Joanna Mitchell

Options: Keep both properties, Nightingale and Round Lake Blvd, Sell Nightingale property, Sell current site, Round Lake Blvd property.

Discussion:

Julie Trude suggested we table discussion until a later date due to COVID-19 and because of a change to the make up of the Andover City Council.

Julie Trude said another church wanted to buy the property and we should seek that out. Andover continues to grow. She cited that there is a proposed housing development along Prairie Road of 400 homes. Property committee said current location has more visibility, Nightingale property is being taxed, portables are in very rough shape, best for us to part with Nightingale property.

It was noted that the discernment question has been going on for years and there has never been a desire to move our church to the Nightingale location, just have a second location. It was also mentioned that there were opportunities for information concerning the properties at 3 informational meetings last week.

Motion was made by Kate Morphew to call the question to end discussion concerning the Nightingale property.

Second by Annie Fitzl

Motion carried

Ratify the Constitution

The constitution that was adopted by the congregation on July 12, 2020 needs to be ratified by a congregational vote. Those that want a copy of the constitution may request a copy and Pastor Joanna will have it posted on the church website.

Motion by Charlie Wold to sell the Nightingale Property. Second by Kate Morphew

Vote | Those members on Zoom voted electronically and those members at Grace voted using paper ballots. Congregation voted on the following:

- 1) Approval of the 2021 budget
- 2) Motion made by the Building Property Committee to sell the property on Nightingale.
- 3) Ratify the 2020 Constitution

Results of the voting | The following are the member voting outcomes from today's meeting.

There were 101 total member votes cast.

2021 Budget

99 yes = 98% of the vote

2 abstain = 2% of the vote

Constitution

98 yes to ratify = 97% of the vote

3 abstain = 3% of the vote

Nightingale Property

87 in favor of selling Nightingale = 86% of the vote

13 total opposed (9 oppose votes + 4

"other" comments falling into the oppose column) = 13% of the vote

1 abstain = 1% of the vote

Additional Comments:

I would like to wait to sell until we know that all remodeling is feasible at the current site.

Wait so a majority of members can vote and we have an idea of how much each will come

I believe there should have been more through discernment

I feel there needs to be more time and input from all church members

Closing prayer – Pastor Joanna

Motion by Kate Morphew to adjourn.

Second by Leah Hadler

Adjournment Approximately 10:35 am