

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2020

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

OCTOBER 18, 2020 – 9:45 A.M.





Executive Pastor Report, Paul Utnage.....	3
Worship Director, Kevin King.....	5
Assimilation and Mobilization, Pastor Greg Grindinger.....	7
Disciple-Making, Greg Maston.....	8
Women’s Ministry, Sarah Alkire.....	9
Adult Education and Care, Pastor Kerry Frantz.....	11
Congregational Care, Pastor John Hopwood.....	12
Student Ministries, John Vanne.....	13
Children’s Ministries, Julie Cordes.....	16
Hospitality, Jonathan Welch.....	19
YAMS and Grace Grads, Jonathan Welch.....	21
Facilities, Randy Whitman.....	23
Communications, Shawn Degenhart.....	25
Media Ministries and IT, Christopher Summers.....	26
Campus Outreach, Mike Jackson.....	27
Global Partnerships.....	29
Administration - Church Vital Statistics.....	30
Financial Report, Sharon Monn.....	31
Office Directory.....	36

Dear Grace Family,

Everything we do and each dollar we invest is about our vision to champion God's unlimited grace in order to inspire all generations and peoples to follow Christ. Last September, we looked forward to the final year in our Journey of Unlimited Grace to conclude our Grace 150 campaign and move into new plans. As we reflected on the previous twelve months, it was clear that the Lord had marvelously blessed the ministry of Grace Presbyterian Church for 150 years. We prayed the Lord would "continue to use us to tell our families, community, and world that the grace of God in Jesus Christ is greater than all our sin, and fills us with such love for Him that He is first in the priorities of our lives." We stood in a facility that was almost debt-free —within a couple months you would finish the last touches of that mortgage through your generosity. Standing together last year, our dreams for families and students, our neighbors and community were tantalizing for 2020.

Little did we know how strange this year would become. A pastoral transition. The COVID season. Social distancing.

We had no idea that God would re-purpose our Journey of Unlimited Grace. Perhaps we should have christened our year, "Here and Back Again," much like a hobbit's tale, but we're not prophets nor the sons of prophets. Yet God knew exactly how He would stretch and mature our church family. Although it looks quite different than we ever imagined a year ago, it's still His Journey.

The way we develop disciples of Christ who are motivated by God's grace is still by focusing our lives upon four values:

Glorifying Worship

We rejoice in the inspiring music and Scripture-saturated services provided in fresh ways by our pastors, worship leaders, musicians, and worship team. God created the bright sky as the roof of our outdoor worship service where so many children and adults gathered together. Even as families worshiped together in a home setting, God kept our eyes on Him. You will enjoy Sandy Willson as he arrives at Grace in a few weeks; he has also invited a string of fantastic preachers to fill in during the times when he is in Memphis. The upcoming digital and online production and premiere for Grace Family Christmas will thrill you.

Gospel Dependence

As we said in the past, trusting the Lord's Word and work more than our own is the essence of gospel dependence. More groups, both small and mid-size, have gathered to pray and encourage one another. We've focused on strengthening the gospel-dependence of our families in ways that we had not imagined last year.

Gracious Humility

Putting the Lord and His mission above personal desires is the essence of gracious humility. This unique year challenged us to embody the value of humility as we served others in such new ways, bending our hearts to God's priorities above our own rights and preferences. Your generosity and care for Bryan and Kathy Chapell as they transitioned to the Stated Clerk of the PCA was so outstanding — I have described your love for them to other pastors who were touched by such an example of humility and appreciation.

EXECUTIVE PASTOR • DR. PAUL UTNAGE

Global Discipleship

As you heard at our recent Global Impact Celebration, your generosity, prayers, and donations have encouraged our Global Partners to serve Christ around the world with a sense of security and passion. Our Grace International Broadcasts continue to draw people from more than 70 nations to Christ. Much like last year, our prayer now is that your generosity, which paid down the mortgage so faithfully, will be converted to missional generosity for a great gospel movement in Peoria and beyond.

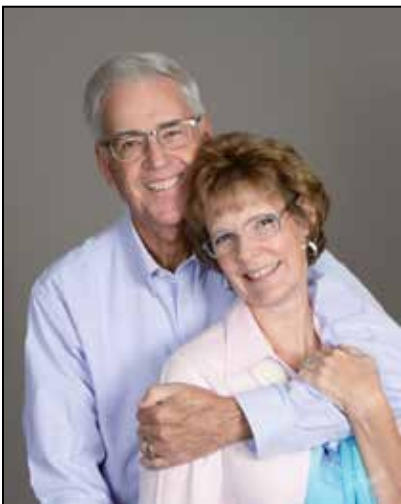
As we experience a resetting of the ways that we worship, commune, and tell others about Christ, we recognize that the values in our vision lead us forward only as they remain our aspirations in a new social environment, rather than waiting for the past to return. In actuality, the past never quite returns, no matter the depth of our wishes. If we believe we should only sit and wait for the “old normal,” then there is no longer reason to humbly depend upon God’s grace, wisdom, and guidance to transform us every day, no matter the circumstances. But the resetting of our ways draws us closer in faith to a Savior Who marches with mercy and perseverance in our journey.

God is never surprised by strange, fluid circumstances. He is the same today, yesterday, and tomorrow. Our Lord and Savior continues that same Journey of Unlimited Grace in our lives for a future with fresh opportunities that the Lord continues putting before our church family. The next twelve months will undoubtedly be a season — indeed, an ongoing journey — of vision blessing from Christ.

So don’t just read this Annual Report as a data list of accomplishments. It’s not merely a document for dollars and resources given to a church. It’s a witness of God’s faithfulness, a testimony to God’s activity in a Journey that has never stopped. As you peruse this Report, read with a yellow highlighter. Read with celebration of the remarkable stories of life-change. Read with wonder at the faithfulness of God. But also pray, asking that Christ would continue to help more generations and peoples to follow Him for the sake of our Savior’s message and mission.

In the grip of grace,

Paul Utnage, Executive Pastor



“Sing to the Lord, all the earth; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all the peoples. For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise. Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and joy are in his dwelling place.” 1 Chronicles 16:23-25a,27

While this year has been one of several unexpected turns, and our ministry has had to change in many drastic ways, our vision and heart are still the same: We are a family of worshipers, serving to unite the church to treasure Jesus through theologically-rich and creatively-beautiful art. Scripture tells us there is “joy in his dwelling place” and “at his right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Psalm 16). Our aim is to use the medium God has given us to turn the eyes of the congregation from this world to their Savior. It is a privilege each week to sing with you, pray with you, and behold Jesus with you. God has been doing a lot with us this year.

Right as the pandemic hit this spring, Grace Worship released its first EP album on all digital platforms titled “Christ Be All”. We were blown away to see this project featured in several top Christian publications, including Worship Leader Magazine, Worship Musician Magazine, GOD TV, CCM Magazine, The Gospel Coalition, and more. We were New Release Today’s artist of the month in May, receiving a 5 star review. The president of CCM Magazine posted on his personal social media accounts that he was moved to tears by our home edition of “Christ Be All”. The project has over 300k streams on Spotify alone, reaching across the globe. We’ve received feedback from churches in Germany, China, Canada, and more looking to bring our music into their congregations. This has been a humbling privilege. Even more than Peoria, cities like Chicago, Atlanta, Dallas, Singapore, and Sydney are the top streaming cities for this project. Lincoln Christian University just recently composed a men’s trio version of “Christ Be All” and performed it in their chapel service. Needless to say, we have been overwhelmed and humbled with the response. Our hope for this project was to resource the church (both ours and the global church) with songs that are both rooted in history and reach forward into our current cultural moment. We praise God for this privilege and look forward to future projects.



The pandemic certainly altered our normal functionality and annual plans, but the Lord has been gracious to give us opportunity to worship together and to continue to create art for His cause. In lieu of an in-person Grace Family Christmas, we have decided to create a worship experience for all that you may share with your family and friends during the Christmas season. Grace Family Christmas will be provided digitally (for free!) this year, maintaining the same level of excellence, heart, and beauty that we desire to bring each year. Our hope is that you would gather your loved ones or community for an evening, share a meal with them, and watch Grace Family Christmas together. We will be releasing this project on what would have been opening night for GFC, December 4th. Along with this project, we will also be releasing two new Grace Worship Christmas songs this year!

WORSHIP

As stated in our vision, we are a family of worshipers serving to unite the church. When I (Kevin) first arrived at Grace in 2015, Pastor Bryan told me it was the heart of our session and leaders to bring the church together in a unified style for worship. The vision for this was to create a service that would invite peoples of all generations and backgrounds to sing to the Lord. Pastor Bryan, along with the session, did a wonderful job of shepherding our congregation through teaching and care to see the benefits and blessings of being a unified congregation.



This past spring the session approved being a church of one style service. For those who might hear this and suddenly feel some trepidation, know that we will continue to be a church that promotes the value and inclusion of songs that have blessed the saints of God through the centuries. Hymns are not leaving any time soon. On the same end, we believe the Lord still uses writers today to bless the church with songs that point us to Jesus, and we will receive those as a benefit to us. We are thankful that God has given us such a rich heritage in music and worship, one that we want to continue through rich theology and musical excellence. Our hope is that, as we progress forward, the congregation would delight to see peoples of all generations finding a place and home at Grace, singing side by side (when socially appropriate) to praise their King.

We look forward to this next year, because Jesus is always our Good Shepherd. Though in a time of pastoral transition and global pandemic, with cultural polarizing views almost anywhere you look, we have a good King who tells us to sing to Him, to tell of his salvation from day to day. Why? Because in all seasons we need to remember He loves us. It was His very heart to save us. It was not out of drudgery that Jesus came but out of joy. He loves his children, and we will continue to praise Him for his salvation and love all the days of our lives.



ASSIMILATION & MOBILIZATION • PASTOR GREG GRINDINGER

Over the past year, we have set out to help people along the “Discipleship Pathway” toward becoming grace-inspired, disciple-making disciples. We have seen God working to bring many people along the path toward maturity.

In the first half of the year, hundreds of people participated in our regularly scheduled assimilation events and classes such as: Taste of Grace (welcome meal for newcomers), Discover Grace (for those wanting to learn next steps of involvement or to join the church), Grace Workshop (Pastor Bryan teaching “Christ in All of Scripture; Grace for All of Life”), Baptism Class (to learn about covenantal family baptism or believer baptism), and Children’s Membership Class (designed for 3rd-6th graders). We have had tremendous participation in these classes. In the first half of the year, we were on track to welcome more new members into the Grace family than during any previous twelve-month period in the last decade.



We have also sought to help our people think biblically about all of life. In January, we hosted a Living in Grace Conference, “Integrating Faith and Work.” Additionally, we have helped our people to develop a Biblical worldview by providing electives in evangelism, parenting, Biblical sexuality, and foundations of the faith.

Another initiative has been to establish regional community groups. Community groups are small groups that emphasize Biblical discussion and building of relationships. Our goal is to establish community groups around the region so that there is an option for one within a few miles of every regular attender of Grace. So far, we have established groups that meet at Grace and in Dunlap, Peoria, Hanna City, Bartonville, Morton, Washington, East Peoria, and Germantown Hills. Some of those towns offer multiple options. In addition, we offered English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for pre-beginner, beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. Now entering its fourth year, our ESL ministry has begun to see people who have not only improved their English but who are investigating or indeed have already trusted in Christ for forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Let us praise the Lord for this movement among internationals in our midst.

In the second half of the year, with the onset of COVID, we transitioned many of our opportunities to virtual formats. We hosted Discover Grace, Grace Workshop, Baptism Classes, and electives such as “Tactics in Defending the Faith” in both online and hybrid formats. We have continued to add new members to our church family. In recent months, more of our community groups and classes have begun to meet in person in homes or at church. The Grace family has been wonderfully resilient during our time of rapid change.



One of the highlights of the year has been the ordination of Pastor Stephen Lawrence and the commissioning of Stephen, Courtney, Layla, and Dane to move to Springfield, Illinois, to plant a new church there. The vision for this new church is to reach the unchurched people of Springfield with the gospel of Jesus and to build a worshipping, disciple-making movement there. We are partnering with the Presbytery of Northern Illinois to reach the people of Springfield and to positively impact that city and even the entire state through God’s power. We are excited to keep you posted as this new work develops.

As we look ahead to the next twelve months, we pray for great advancement in God’s kingdom taking place among all generations and peoples. We eagerly await this January’s Living in Grace Conference with Pastor Thurman Williams, “United in Christ in a Divided Age.” We also look forward to offering interesting electives such as “Pursuing Your Calling.” We plan to add more virtual and in-person community groups all around the Peoria area so adults of all ages can find a loving fellowship within a few miles of their homes. Plus, we continue to bring new members into our church family.

We have seen God working this year through normal times and during COVID times. We are thankful to serve our Lord who is always at work to bring all generations and peoples into his family.

DISCIPLE-MAKING • GREG MASTON

Disciple-making is an intentional labor of love in the lives of others, engaging them where they are and imparting the gospel, God's Word, and one's life with humble dependence on God to grow them in Christ and multiply.

Can this even be done now? Can we still share our faith with others and raise up mature and equipped disciples effectively during a pandemic? Is God still working in us and through us to make disciples?

Pre-COVID, it was inspiring to participate in the Staff and Session Retreat in February, seeing hearts well up for our surrounding community and hearing disciple-making voiced as a resonating desire of our leadership. At that time, we were also seeing some encouraging growth connected to disciple-making at Grace, just one of which was the fact 70% of the number of men (post-college) who attend our worship services were also involved in a group/class at Grace where their discipleship was a focus. That also included the 70 men who were actively a part of our high commitment, weekly meeting, Life-on-Life groups.

Then, COVID hit with all its might in March. But our God is greater and because of His empowering grace we saw Him bring innovation and intentionality of disciple-making and care to new levels among us. Our group leaders seemed to take to Zooming like fish to water. They were even quick to start helping other groups and classes connect, as well as finding creative ways to help those not technologically inclined to be connected easily to their groups. Also, many of our leaders and group members utilized the training they had received over the past few years to help with the COVID Care Calls to our church family. Most of our groups were able to continue meeting and ministering to each other well during the shelter in place order. We even had new groups forming in ways that it was obvious God had brought them together. Some utilized the "ONE Grace" sermon study questions and even involved their children. One of our Life-on-Life groups, who had before COVID put on local Christian satsungs for their friends, decided to do one on Zoom and had non-believing friends chime from India with them. They had a wonderful experience sharing the gospel globally.

We have continued to multiply out new groups this fall even with a pandemic. Groups are finding ways to either meet in person safely, to continue Zooming, or a hybrid of the two. There is also some great help coming for parents at Grace to help better equip us to disciple their kids and teens. God has even opened an opportunity for a team from Grace to help train and coach churches in the Chicagoland area to seed their own Life-on-Life Missional Discipleship Movements.

Can we still share our faith with others and raise up mature and equipped disciples effectively during a pandemic? Is God still working in us and through us? Yes, apart from Christ we can do nothing. But with God, all things are possible. God calls us to make disciples and He has shown us this year not even a pandemic can stop His kingdom from advancing as we are faithful to His call and humbly dependent on Him.

Because we are dependent on God to help us make mature and equipped disciples of our Lord, will you please pray for the following things for this coming year?

- Pray for the Wednesday a.m. and p.m. men's studies starting this month. The leaders have done an excellent job planning well and creating inviting and safe environments.
- Pray for all the groups who have started up this fall already. May God bless their disciple-making efforts and continue to give them all creative and effective ways to connect and reach out to others.
- Pray for Grace parents who have a unique season of opportunity during this pandemic to be intentional in discipling their kids. Pray also for the mentor parents and staff who are hoping to provide some great equipping and coaching coming soon.
- Pray for those whom God has put in your life to share the gospel with, in word and deed. Pray for the brothers and sisters He has you walking with in life and calls you to help them remember God's grace and grow in Christ.
- Pray for revival among us and that Grace would be one as our Lord prayed for us, in John 17: "so that the world may know you [God] have sent me [Jesus]." (John 17:23)

Throughout this year, I was often reminded of the Lord's faithfulness. Life is full of change — some good and some challenging — but the Lord remains the same yesterday, today, and forever. Praise Him!

The women's ministry seeks to bring women of all ages together to grow in faith, study God's Word, and to share the gospel with those in our community. This year we saw God move in many ways even after the arrival of the pandemic.

Weekly Meetings

On Monday mornings a faithful group of women gather at the church to pray. The women's prayer fellowship meets each week to pray for our church, our community, our missionaries, and our world. Each week, women of all ages met for Tuesday Bible Study. This year we were able to offer a Spanish Bible Study, Side by Side group for doctors' wives, Quilting & More group, a Bible study for MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers), and two other Bible study groups. Tuesday mornings are a great time for women to study the Bible, pray, and enjoy fellowship. Quality child care and homeschool classes remain an integral part of this ministry. On Wednesday nights we again hosted a women's Bible study during Midweek Grace. We were challenged by this year's focus on biblical hospitality and evangelism. Women gathered at tables to watch a video before sharing time together in small groups.



In the fall, we launched another year of MOPS. The year kicked off with an amazing event called "Rise and Shine" where we partnered with a local company that teaches sign language to young children. Moms and their kids from all over the community attended this fun event and many moms were invited to join MOPS. This event and word-of-mouth was so successful that we soon found ourselves completely overwhelmed with the number of women and children who wanted to attend. We quickly pivoted and divided our program so that we were able to offer MOPS every other week which doubled our capacity for attendance. The amazing MOPS leadership team led by Carly Hill worked very hard to make these last minute changes and handled this season with love and grace.

Monthly Meetings

His Alone is a special gathering for women who are single — widowed, divorced, or never married. They meet once a month for fellowship, lunch, and encouragement. Joy Moore does a wonderful job of leading and building up this lovely group of ladies.

Grace Women's Fellowship met every month for lunch following Tuesday Bible study. The women took turns preparing a meal, sharing a devotional, and enjoy a special guest speaker. Many wonderful women have stepped up to lead this group this year, and we are so thankful for their hard work.





A New Season

Our spring semester had just kicked off when COVID decided to interfere. Most of our programming was cancelled, and we tried to keep connections with intentional phone calls, social media, and even the home delivery of fun-filled “shelter in place” goodie bags for the MOPS moms and kids. We are still navigating ministry in this strange time as it is difficult to know exactly how . . .

We tried something new in the summer and moved our Bible study online. Before the shutdown, we had chosen Lysa Terkeurst’s *“It’s Not Supposed to Be This Way”* as our summer study and asked Jen Hill to lead. We had no idea how perfect those plans would be for such a time as this. We were able to gather together in a large group for Jen’s teaching before breaking out into small groups all using the Zoom platform. It was such an encouragement to “see” one another.

What’s Next?

Women’s ministry at Grace is a team approach. Kristine Byrne was hired in the fall as the women’s ministry childcare coordinator. Her role involves recruiting and training

workers and volunteers to care for hundreds of children during Tuesday Bible Study and MOPS meetings. We are incredibly thankful for Kristine’s leadership this past year! Beth Hilbert continues in her role as women’s ministry program coordinator helping plan events and providing key support. Because of an amazing team of leaders, women’s ministry is able to serve well in many capacities.

This fall we are in a season of waiting as we are yet unable to meet because of COVID. Most of our women’s programming includes childcare or large groups, so we are working to create new ideas for ministry and determine exactly what the women of Grace are needing during this time. We have a large library of Bible study videos and resources that are available to lend out, so I’d love to see women lead small groups in their homes as we wait to gather again at the church. In addition, we have a Woman 2 Woman mentoring ministry and Life on Life groups that are great vehicles to develop intentional spiritual growth.

By God’s grace, I feel we were able to achieve our goal of moving further from “programs” and closer to “people.” Women’s ministry provides many opportunities for spiritual growth and connection with other believers. This year I heard so many stories of women reaching other women, sharing the gospel, and investing in each other’s lives. Truly I am thankful for the opportunity to be a part of God’s work at Grace!



Ministry at Grace Presbyterian Church requires a unique blend of honoring established commitments, caring for present activities and needs, and strategically looking at leadership development and community outreach. Though it may seem that COVID hampered the church, we recognize many positive opportunities that allow for reassessment and reengagement going forward in ministry.

Much of the calendar year provided fresh elective class offerings throughout the Sunday School hour and Midweek Grace electives. Topics centered around real challenges facing Christians in the workplace, home, and community. Various class offerings addressed marriage, parenting, God's design in human sexuality, and spiritual gifts/calling. In the present season, the vision accelerating elective class participation may be delayed until the end of 2020. However, training events will be provided each month to enrich and encourage Christian growth and discipleship where we live, work, and recreate.

The goal of any event, class, conference, etc. is to complement the discipleship assimilation pathway. Greater use of Zoom meetings has created new connection points to those unable to meet in person. Ministry that formerly required getting to the church building has transitioned to a church without walls that brings training, discussion, and care right to the living room of each home. Though there is no adequate substitute for in-person gatherings, the regionalizing of Grace's ministry and expanding footprint towards those living outside of Central Illinois has grown.

Creative and adaptive measures require new strategies to equip every believer who calls Grace home. Yet one thing remains: Grace is committed to an authoritative, infallible Word of God that provides the staple of our teaching platform from the pulpit, classroom, and home Bible studies.

One example that demonstrates how the church provides the context of spiritual care is the testimony of a member who shares her recent Sunday School experience. She says, "I have been in attendance of Solid Rock Sunday School... I have been blessed with solid teaching in Biblical principles that I am very grateful for. Growing at Grace, I never knew others would actually "help me," after so many years being on my own. But, so tired and exhausted from being alone and doing everything on my own, the Lord showed me how to serve my church family well in areas He gifted me in and also showed me to ask this need of "my church family." This member recently moved from one home to another in our community and greatly benefitted from her class members assisting in the move and setup of her new place.

The challenge for all of us is to make sure that we have a place of fellowship beyond worship at Grace. It might be a Sunday School class, Midweek Grace elective, small group, support group, or life-on-life group. The key is to find a place to be spurred on in Christian growth, and in turn to encourage others to do likewise. We need each other to fulfill the role of being the body of Christ with our Lord as the head. Virus or no virus, we have much to be thankful for and plenty to look forward to in the myriad of future ministry opportunities. It has been my sheer delight to be part of Grace's journey for these last 13 years, knowing the best is yet to come because the gospel is our fuel for living and power force to reach our community. Our confidence is high because Christ is Lord. He is building His Church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

The Congregational Care ministry could not be effective if it weren't for all the volunteers who take it upon themselves to call, care, visit, and pray for others in need, often unbeknownst to me. Even in this season of COVID, God's servants have not fallen asleep but have continued to care for the body of Christ.

I don't mean to be morbid or to come across as a Debbie Downer, but what I have learned and continue to learn in my ministry at Grace Presbyterian is that our people die well. In the face of death, I see that there is an unwavering sweetness of spirit that can only come from a profound faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. These invaluable lessons will always be etched in the deepest recesses of my mind, only to be pulled out when I walk on that challenging path, while facing my own mortality. Those who minister under the umbrella of congregational care have been exceedingly blessed through the testimony of the dying.

Our afflicted congregants have embraced the words of the revered preacher, Charles Haddon Spurgeon: "If Jesus loves you, and you are sick let all the world see how you glorify God in your sickness. Let friends and nurses see how the beloved of the Lord are cheered and comforted by Him."

On a personal level, I have enjoyed visiting with people in their homes or on their porches. Loneliness and isolation have been an ongoing challenge for all of us. While phone calls and Zooming have been somewhat beneficial, they will never replace the joys of face to face fellowship.

I have heard heartbreaking stories of those who have lost loved ones during COVID, who were not allowed to visit their dying, almost up to the very end. Unfortunately, this nightmare scenario became a reality for many of our people. Also, imagine upon the death of your loved one, you wanted to invite the body of Christ to their funeral service, only to find that you had to settle for an outdoor cemetery service instead. That too, was a reality for many of our people. Yet, God's grace was sufficient, even in these stressful moments.

A special shout out to Geri Ringelspaugh who started a GriefShare program at Grace Presbyterian almost twenty years ago. When her husband died, she was faced with the daunting task of rearing three children. At that time, she could not find a program for the sorrowing. Years later, she would make a bold and time-consuming move to start a biblically based program for the grieving. That program continues to this day and has been a blessing to many who no longer must mourn in secret.

The gospel of Christ is truly the power of God for our salvation. The good news is that the imputed righteousness of Christ has enabled us to stand before God justified. However, the transforming gospel does not end with God justifying the sinner but continues as we desire to die more and more to our sin and to live more and more to the glory of God. The gospel enables us to see how dependent we are on the awesome grace of God. Thus, we truly never get beyond the cross as we continue on this long, arduous journey to our heavenly home.

A special thanks to these important ministries:

Congregational Care Nurses, Women's Monday Morning Prayer Group, Women's Cancer Support Group, Friends Visiting, GriefShare, Hospital Visitation Team, the crew that prepares meals after our Funeral/Celebration of Life services, and 55 & Beyond Fellowship. These ministries serve the body of Christ well at Grace Presbyterian Church.

What a year! I remember as 2020 began many were talking about having a “20/20 vision”: a year of clarity, insight, and traction moving forward. Now many are wishing 2020 never existed or that we could have a do-over! Everything is different, and there will likely be unforeseen ripples for quite a while to come. But God is still in control and working — and we have seen that in the Student Ministry!

Cara Schuck and Andrew Kemp have done a great job helping me oversee the student ministries! It was a unique arrangement in the fall 2019 semester as I was also working to coach and equip them to help lead the ministry during my sabbatical (February-April 2020). It made for a very fast-paced and demanding fall semester as I worked to lock down all the logistics for the ministry in my absence. As we finished up a great boys’ winter retreat in mid-January 2020, I felt confident I was ready for my sabbatical and the interns were ready to lead as well.



Sabbatical season, John’s experience (Feb-Apr 2020)

One main aim of my sabbatical was to focus on how to better come alongside parents. My growing passion has been to focus on the big picture with families, helping students to walk with the Lord beyond high school and into their adult life, rather than becoming a familiar nationwide statistic of “falling away” from the church after high school. I knew from research, statistics, and my own experiences with students that the primary correlation for students walking with the Lord later in life is parents who intentionally disciple their kids, continue to model a Christian walk for them, and invest in them beyond their youth group years. Parents matter big time!

As I eased into the sabbatical in February, I was able to spend more time with my family and rest/refresh more, which was a blessing. I was also able to read a lot and do one conference at the very beginning of March. When the pandemic hit, it certainly changed the trajectory for what sabbatical would look like. Suddenly, everything was closed, my remaining trips were cancelled, and my kids were now homeschoolers. Although I had fleeting moments of questioning why God would allow this to happen during my sabbatical, I felt Him reminding me that any plans I could make pale in comparison to what He had planned for my time: “The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.” (Proverbs 16:9)



God reminded me of the fact that He was still sovereign and still loved me. Through the second half of my sabbatical time, I had lots of time with Beth and our kids and I was forced to slow down and remember God’s words: “Be still, and know that I am God.” (Psalm 46:10) It was actually a huge blessing of a time. I certainly didn’t accomplish all I had originally wanted to, but I felt like I accomplished what the Lord had for me.

STUDENT MINISTRIES

Sabbatical season, Andrew's and Cara's experience (Feb-Apr 2020)

While John was on sabbatical, we had planned to have a girls' winter retreat (the boys' was in January 2020) and weekly youth group gatherings along with a few events. With Cara trained and ready, along with some great female leaders, we were able to have our first ever off-site girls winter retreat, which went great!

John prepared us well for his sabbatical season; he thought through every possible scenario we could run into.

Well . . . almost every scenario. About a month into John's sabbatical, COVID made its way to the U.S. and we were all sheltering at home soon after, which changed everything. We were able to continue meeting virtually, but figuring out how to do Student Ministry in a pandemic is quite a

strange task, especially when your ministry director is on sabbatical. Thankfully, the Lord carried us through it. We started hosting Sunday school over Zoom as well as hosting some regular virtual game nights and Bible studies. We were able to get a pretty good system running! At one point, we almost had 50 students joining over Zoom! While we were able to keep things going and learned so much as we went, we were also very glad to have John return in May.



Summer Season

This summer looked a bit different for us with our students. In the beginning, it felt like a lot was being taken away. Our two big events, Summer Camp and Mission: Peoria, were both cancelled and we could not gather in groups larger than 10 until July. God was working in and through this season though. We had student small groups continue through the summer, which felt like a great way to stay safe and still connected. It turned out to be a great success! It was awesome to see students engaging both in person and virtually with their groups, growing in relationship with each other and with the Lord. We also had a great summer intern: Jonathan Cordes. He was able to help us transition from all virtual meetings to gathering in person.



We also had the opportunity to do some activities in an unconventional way. Mission: Peoria was cancelled in person but was held somewhat virtually. We had students come to church during the week to engage with the mission from the Dream Center and serve in a different way every day! Our group served Grace by passing out virtual VBS supplies, doing yardwork on the church property, and writing letters to home-bound church members and global partners. We also served our community by stuffing backpacks for the Dream Center and volunteering at the Midwest Food Bank.

I (John) am excited to have both Cara and Andrew as Student Ministry Interns for another year! This August, Jonathan Welch transitioned to take on the additional role as head of the Young Adult/Grace Grad Ministry. Cara also moved to full time, taking on additional roles in the Hospitality Ministry. Adam has phased out of his Young Adult/Grace Grad Internship as he gets ready to go on the field but will continue to be involved as a leader while he and his family are here.



Plans moving forward

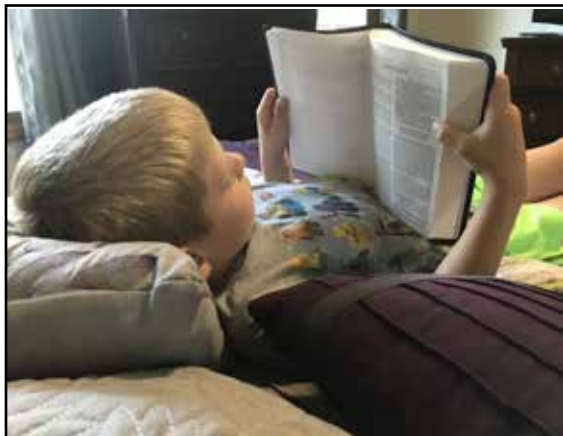
We are blessed in the fact that we can still connect with students in life-on-life relationships. We have become more confident in our ability to provide digital connection through Zoom and streaming opportunities. We long for the day when masks and social distancing will be a thing of the past but are also grateful for the lessons God has taught us during this season. As we move forward, we desire to put a high premium on relationships through small groups, socially-distanced table discussions at Sunday School, and events that are appropriate under the current guidelines.

As of now, we are planning for some old traditions to come back in summer 2021 such as retreats, Summer Camp in June, Mission: Peoria in July, the possibility of a foreign missions trip, and more consistent connections with students, leaders, and parents. We have been grateful for our leaders who have been willing to step into this unknown time, being willing to connect with students both in person and digitally. We're excited to see them continue!



CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES • JULIE CORDES

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)



I have been so excited to see how God has been working in the hearts and lives of our Grace Kidz's families as they have been living out this passage in new ways. Families surely had plenty of time to "sit in their house" this year! But the exciting part is that parents were given more opportunities to focus on the beginning of that passage: "teach them [these words that I command] diligently to your children."

One of my main goals for Children and Family Ministries has always been to help parents lead their families so they are worshiping and learning more about God together. With no Sunday School right now, parents have become their child's teachers. Each week, parents receive a link that help them

walk through the lesson with their family. One dad told me that he wasn't sure how to teach the Bible to his kids, but now he is doing it. Jason Theuri shares his family's experience:

"My kids love Sunday School, so it was very difficult for us as the parents to explain to them that we would not be going to Church as usual . . . [Then] we saw emails giving us all what we needed to start with, and what a blessing it has been since then . . . We immediately started our Sunday school at home..and the kids loved it. As we continued on, we decided that both of our older kids, Ethan and Ella, would also be leading the Sunday school on different Sundays . . . It's been a wonderful experience though they still miss (in person) Sunday School and their friends. We thank God for our Church Sunday."



God has also been using devotionals that parents have been given on two different occasions. These are booklets that the families can read together that help them learn more about who God is and who we are in Him. One dad wrote that he reads a page to his kids before school each day.

We continued to recognize the milestones the families have been going through, even though we haven't been able to have the traditional formal events. One of those milestones is our new 1st Graders receiving a "big kid" Bible. After her son received his, one mom wrote, *"Caleb came into my room with his Bible, laid down on the bed, and started reading, all unprompted . . . Made my heart happy, and praying he continues throughout his life."*





During this season, our church has the privilege of being able to worship as a true Grace Family since everyone is in the worship services together. A favorite addition to the service has been the Children's Message. Adults even comment about how much they learn from this five-minute video in which a pastor or others highlight a biblical truth. To help kids focus on the different aspects of the service, they receive a "My Family Worship Guide." One mom commented after attending the indoor service with her family, *"I hate that my kids make noise and are busy, but we are getting better with that . . . I like that we are helping our kids learn something that we want them doing for the rest of their lives."*

Britt Anderson became the Children's Ministry Assistant in March of 2020. Britt's focus is to help provide the tools necessary for family worship and, when the church building fully opens, an environment for children to learn and grow in their Christian faith.

Bridget Streeter also joined the Grace Kidz Team as the Sunday Morning Superintendent in March of 2020. Bridget oversees the Nursery and Preschool rooms, providing a welcoming atmosphere and working with our volunteers to make sure children are learning and growing in a safe environment.

As always, VBS was another highlight this year! Families could choose to participate in their own home with only their own family, get together with another family or two, or sign up to be in a "Host Home." Ann White provided one of those Host Homes. She said, "This year's theme was 'Joy' and did God ever fill my cup with joy!! I was disappointed when I heard that VBS was not going to take place in the church building. Then God reminded me that He is sovereign, and I knew that He could use the less than desirable situation to showcase His great power and to show how to have Joy in the midst of COVID. Because we hosted a preschool VBS, almost all of the moms stayed so not only the children, but also the moms, got to hear the lesson. One mom told me she had



wondered how she should talk to her son about God. She knows how to do that now that she saw it modeled during VBS!"



We started this fiscal year as always, with a calendar full of events and programs: the Pal-Gal Banquet, the Pinewood Derby (we had a new track and sensor this year!), the Daddy-Daughter Dinner, and the Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon, to name some of the highlights. Life can get quite busy in the children's ministry world! Now, though,

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

I have been able to slow down, too, and focus more on the individual people. One of my favorite additions during this time has been "Chat/Play with Miss Julie." This has given me time to connect on a deeper level with some of our families. The Kleitsch kids have said how they enjoy the connections with church, even though they can't meet inside yet.



Before March, our attendance for a Sunday morning or a Wednesday night would see 200 kids or more. It was exciting to see this growth over the past few years! And I long for the day we can have that many in our building again.

However, the most important growth is what I saw during the second half of this fiscal year. Families were forced to slow down and spend time together instead of running in several different directions. Because of that, they have time to "diligently teach" their kids about God's goodness and grace. My prayer for the coming year is that this becomes a new habit for families. Even as we begin to have classes and events again, the focus will continue to be on helping parents disciple their kids so "these words . . . shall be on your heart."



Fall 2019 kicked off another exciting year with our theme of “One” Volunteer. Although COVID would have led us to view this focus in a different and negative interpretation — that we would only have “one volunteer” show up — I cannot imagine a more encouraging and strengthening theme than this. For you see, “One” Volunteer is truly a rally cry. It is a reminder not of our isolation but of our calling. Action starts with “One” of us first saying “yes” before that service turns seclusion into inclusion as we serve “One” another. Lastly, “One” calls us to unity in Spirit, mind, and Christ. The apostles Peter and Paul said it first and best when they wrote: “. . . then make joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind,” and “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” (Phil. 2:2, 1 Peter 4:10)



Dorothy Bartel shared how after reading the book *The Gospel Comes with a House Key*, she wanted to be “One”

who would bring her neighborhood together as “One” in which to share the gospel about the One she loves and follows. “I was so blessed and challenged by this book as the Lord showed me that I should invite six neighbors to my home for dinner, of which three I knew and three I did not. At the end of a wonderful evening that we all enjoyed, Lisa — one who I didn’t know before — said this was a great evening and we should do this every month, to which we all agreed to meet in March. Then Covid hit and we could not meet. In April, Lisa’s husband was diagnosed with throat cancer and began treatment. In May, Lisa had a heart attack, followed by open heart surgery.”

Through all of this, because of “One” simple action of an invitation to a meal, the door was opened for Dorothy to minister to Lisa and her husband and for the gospel to be shared during all of the following life events. Since May, it is even more exciting to report that Lisa and her husband started to watch church online and have gotten connected with a Bible study. It’s amazing to think that what started as a simple dinner invitation turned into the exact “various forms of grace” being dispensed as mentioned in 1 Peter 4:10 — because “One” took action through the gifts she had been given.



Likewise, we as a ministry have seen and experienced these various graces because of the commitment to be “One” and to serve “One” another. I am quickly drawn to reminisce about our first hospitality Zoom party. Having 100 of our volunteers all together for one moment to share in the laughter of games, the encouragement of scripture, and the power of prayer is a memory I will forever cherish — as well as having to scroll over three screens to be able to see everyone on the Zoom call! I also think of the creativity of our team to create events where we could connect, enjoy each other’s company, and share what God was doing in our lives, all while still observing social distancing. Two of these events were our Family Fun Night Drive-in Movies in July and August and the “Celebrate the Savior” fireworks spectacular in September. These events fit the times perfectly, especially as the fireworks allowed family and friends to gather and spend a unique evening worshipping the Lord together. For those who have appreciated and enjoyed these events, let me share that these would not have been possible without the blessing of the Lord and the support and leadership of the

HOSPITALITY

individuals on our special events team: Jonathan Cordes, Zach Zwart, Zak Kelly, Andrew Kemp, KT Worrall, Josh Coulson, Cecil & Becky Crutchfield, Jaminoel Crow, and Wayne Pullen. We as a church are blessed to have such an amazing group of talented followers of Christ that are united as “One” to bring us together as “One.”



I am also thankful for our Hospitality Leadership Team! In this pandemic season, it is easy to believe the lie that “one” means you are alone. But I do not believe this! In every Zoom meeting and through each Sunday morning, I have appreciated and been humbled by the creative minds and servant leadership displayed by our team: Dorothy Bartel, Mary Peterson, Larry Bielema, Wes Read, Cara Schuck, Tom Spillman, Josh and Kathleen Ulm, and Bob Yonker. Please know what a difference and influence you make for our Lord, for Grace, and to me.

Also, thank you to our hospitality team for their leadership! Thank you to all of those who have carted around water bottles, fruit snacks, and song sheets, all while striking up gospel conversations to encourage those who attend the 8:30 a.m. drive-in service. To those at the 11 a.m. service, thank you for your smiling eyes (because you’re wearing a mask . . . but I can still see you smiling!) and for helping individuals find their way to their seats while also social distancing.



As I think upon all of this, I must say that this has been “One” memorable year! “One” that has brought trials and tribulations but also “One” that has ushered in fullness and joy. As we look forward to the coming year, I leave you with “One” last thought: would you be “One” who joins our team and leads with us?



A Roller Coaster

I've recently come to appreciate the "Roller Coaster & Holy Spirit" meme that depicts what it feels like to have God in control, whizzing down the track of life that He has placed us on. We, like a child, don't often give much of a second thought to the ride until there are times that we are gripping on for dear life as we seemingly plummet out of control. And what of the Holy Spirit? Well, the Holy Spirit knows the thrills that God has in store and helps navigate the ride while working to encourage and speak to the child with Him . . . which is us. Now, all theology and laughter aside, this meme truly encapsulates the ride that God has had our ministry on since last year, even with the addition of a double corkscrew called COVID. Throughout our ride God has been faithful, providing for us through His Spirit and His provision. One of those provisions this year was Adam's internship. With Austin Branson's departure in the summer of 2019, we were thankful for both the calling and ministry that Adam and Carly have shared with our college students and young adults this past year. Through intentional relationships and ministry opportunities, God has blessed us through Adam's leadership as he encouraged this ministry in what might be considered one of the most challenging times in recent history. For myself, (Jonathan Welch) I'm excited to hit the ground running with Adam as I take hold of the proverbial "roller coaster lap bar" and hold on for dear life while God shows us what He has in store for us this coming year.



Pre-COVID - The Ride Begins

As Adam and I reminisced about this past year, we both affirmed the provision that God gave through Adam's focused teaching on essential pieces of a spiritually healthy life. With a number of young adults having just graduated from college and/or still transitioning into adulthood, many had not yet thought through or established healthy spiritual disciplines that would help guide and protect them in life.

In order to help aid in this communal growth, the young adults were challenged to bring more spiritual conversation into their Thursday night volleyball time. By including a short devotion and discussion time, our young adults were able to hear and discuss what God's Word says about community. We looked at how to foster a heart for the lost of this world, how to spend time in worship together, and how to be in the Word and in prayer.

COVID - A Ride You've Never Experienced Before

The Young Adult Ministry and Grace Grads, like most ministries, were impacted drastically by COVID but God was faithful and provided us with many options. Since volleyball was no longer viable, we moved to weekly Zoom meetings where we discussed God's Word and played online group games.

Many of us reached out to our friends through calls and texts to encourage one another, set up times to hang out over Zoom, or go on "socially distanced" walks.

YAMS & GRACE GRADS

Grace Grads also met over Zoom to discuss God's Word. They talked about how they could better engage their friends with the gospel in addition to answering questions such as: "What does it look like to make disciples like Jesus did?" and "What does God call us to in partnering with Him to accomplish the Great Commission?" We also addressed more personal topics like "Dating as followers of Jesus" and how they can guard each other's hearts in order to make Christ-honoring decisions while considering next steps in a relationship.

In the Age of COVID - The Ride Becomes Exhilarating

For myself, (Jonathan) joining the YAMs this summer was like hopping on a roller coaster mid-ride! You go from 0-60 in a matter of seconds and the best part is getting to enjoy some of the most memorable and best parts of the ride while having skipped the long wait in line. (I'll equate COVID to that of waiting in line. :>) But the ride and the exhilarating memories with those that are with you are the things that make it worth it. One example is the kayak and canoe trip to Turkey Run — an awesome time to float down a river while enjoying God's creation, new and old friendships, and escaping just for a moment the confines of COVID. We also

enjoyed Thursday night volleyball followed by a trip to Culvers or a local outdoor restaurant to share about life. Even better yet, how about the socially distanced cookouts we've done or the fireworks spectacular we all joined together to watch? It seems each passing week only brings more fullness and excitement especially as others join us.



One of our young adults, Daniel, shared, "I was anticipating moving to Chicago but because of the pandemic had decided to stay in Central IL. I was nervous about trying to find a new church but decided to try out Grace Pres. All it took was one service and connecting with the welcome team to realize this could be my home church. I joined YAMS for volleyball that week and instantly was able to connect and even join a small group. I am so thankful to be involved in a Bible-centered community be with others my age."

So What's Next?

Life truly is fullest when we do life together and we're excited to have so many new young adults joining us on this ride that Christ has us on. As fall approaches, I'm looking forward to our Young Adults Retreat at Miracle Camp in Lawton, Michigan, where we'll have the opportunity to get away as a group and talk about the alignment of priorities to worship, connect, serve, and reach. Over Christmas break, we will also engage the Grace Grads with gatherings and a winter retreat.

We direct our praise to God for all that He has done at Grace Presbyterian Church again this year! Thank you for your kind words of personal encouragement and support. I continue to praise the Lord for allowing me to be part of a local church that desires to invest in making God and HIS gift of Christ known to the entire world.

Regarding facilities: What is happening at Grace?

- People serving one another – to our many volunteers: without you, it would be impossible to meet the many ongoing ministry needs at Grace.
- Safety and Security/parking patrol – over 25 men and women continue to provide a safety presence and assist with parking at Grace events. Thanks for helping things go smoothly and safely.
- Monday Morning Men’s Group – an average of 20 men served each week to help with the maintenance needs.
- Numerous doctors, nurses, EMTs – you helped us repeatedly with health-related needs. Thank you!
- Bus drivers – 16 drivers served our bus driving needs this past year. Youth ministries and camps, Special Needs bus ministry, youth camps, 55+ Fellowship outings, Children’s ministry, Peoria area service projects, and the list goes on!
- Lawn care helpers – over a dozen folks consistently help keep the grass, trees, bushes, and flowers looking beautiful. Compliments are passed on to you for the beauty of our landscape.
- Business owners, technicians/engineers, and advisory personnel who attend Grace – thank you for providing services and donating items to our church maintenance, vehicle, and facility needs. May God continue to bless you richly.
- Event set up and tear downs – many hands make lighter work – so thank you for giving of yourself to facilitate events like: VBS, GIC, GFC, church picnic, conferences, etc.



- Holiday decorators: (Ladies and men) – we all enjoy the beautiful decorating you provide for the holidays. Christmas and Easter are always special.
- Snow and Ice Removal Team – you were up early on those chilly mornings to help shovel snow and chip ice so that you can get into church safely. Thank you.
- Thank you to those who helped facilitate and set up the outside Sunday services these past months. You provided another avenue for worship and fellowship.
- Co-workers and Staff – It is a blessing to see your hearts for God and the people to whom you minister.
- Maintenance Team and Custodial – thank you for keeping up with the many changing needs of our ministries.
- Building and Grounds Committee, Finance team, deacons, elders – thank you for your encouragement, support, and leadership.

As you can imagine our church is very well used. We again were able to host numerous ministries and events: GFC, the 4th year of ESL, Living in Grace Conference in January, Global Impact Celebration, Vacation Bible School done remotely this year, Ladies Conference and weekly TBS, MOPS, Youth

FACILITIES



meetings, Campus Outreach conferences, weddings, prayer meetings, untimely funerals, Child Evangelism Fellowship banquet, Special Needs date nights, Bible Study Fellowship (Sat a.m./ Monday p.m.), Community Bible Study on Wed/Thurs, Classical Conversations on Fridays, summer movie nights, fire works, etc. We also hosted outside events, such as: General Election polling, Illinois Eye Clinic Staff training, weekly Mission food drive collection, Bible literature promotion for WPEO/ Love Packages, and yearly sponsorship of the Operation Christmas Child program.

Incidents/Accidents

- Any health-related incidents were able to be directed to a local emergency health care providers.
- At Christmas time we had two of our buses vandalized which required some repairs.
- We had some additional driving-related damage to our buses which was handled through insurance.
- There was some theft that took place within the building which has caused us to redirect our entry to the church, as well as to add additional security cameras.

COVID

- A deep cleaning and intense disinfection were completed initially in late March/April on the entire church including the shampooing of carpets and furniture. We continue to disinfect after each class and group use of specific classrooms, restrooms, entry points, hallways, including all high touch points.
- Night security watchman (March 14-July 5th) - During the time of Grace building closure, five men participated in the nightly watch at the front entrance from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. Although they were only to report suspicious activity to the appropriate authorities, their presence seemed to deter some suspicious activity and no incidents took place to our church property. One volunteer wrote: “. . . it is a blessing serving God this way and the church I love - I feel good doing it.” Thank you, guys, for staying awake each night to keep an eye on our church!

Ongoing/Future Projects

- We began to level the area north of the parking lot (affectionately known as Mt. Grace) to create ministry “green space.” Because of the early frost last fall and I-74 construction which pulled our contractor away, the completion of the leveling has recently started back up again.
- Updating the parking lot is scheduled to begin this year.
- The extension of the garage to provide needed storage and workspace is set to begin this year also.



Prayer and Praise

- For continued safety of all our Maintenance related volunteers and staff.
- For God’s wisdom and timing in returning to a more normal routine after COVID.
- We are asking God to provide future volunteers for many of our ongoing ministries taking place around the facility.

What a year! I was just beginning to get settled into my role as Director of Communications when everything got turned upside down! Despite all the unknowns, frustrations, and constant changes, the Lord has continually shown himself to be faithful. I'm so glad I don't have to have all the answers and that we can trust Him for peace in the midst of the storms!

In a pre-Covid world, normal communications were sent out from the church in a variety of ways: Friday e-newsletters, all-church emails and letters, Facebook, posters, postcards, and regular announcements from the platform on Sunday mornings. Throughout the last seven months, communicating with our people outside of a "normal" Sunday service has become even more important. Shortly after everything shut down in March, we began a weekly video devotional from Pastor Bryan as well as the daily devotional, "Encouragement for the Family of Grace." The online streaming of our services has become a valuable tool to continue to connect with you and we are thankful for the capabilities we have to do so.

Have you downloaded the church app yet? Available in the Apple Store and on Google Play, this is a great resource for you to stay connected to your Grace family. Here are some of the highlights of the app:

- Events Calendar
- Media - watch the livestream or past messages and services
- Submit prayer requests
- Safe and secure giving
- Lyrics for the outdoor service
- Links to wonderful resources for the church family
- YouVersion Bible
- Notifications sent out for important announcements or events.



If you haven't downloaded it yet, be sure to check it out! More features will be added in the coming months.



Through the "Grace International Broadcasts," we continue to air Pastor Bryan's "Unlimited Grace" radio programs in over 80 countries around the world. We look forward to expanding our catalog to include future messages from Pastor Sandy Willson as well as our next senior pastor.

Please continue to pray for Grace's staff and leadership. The situations we find ourselves in are new to all of us. It is our desire to not only serve the church and meet the vastly different needs of our people, but in all those things to continually point people to Christ. The message of Christ's love for us needs to remain uncluttered from the noise that is dominating headlines and social media in today's world.

The Lord has blessed Grace Presbyterian Church with the resources needed to face the challenges of 2020. We were already livestreaming our services before the pandemic hit and our system was set up in such a way that scaling it up for heavier use was easy to accomplish in a short period of time. This allowed us to minister not only to our own people, but many more who don't attend Grace and were unable to attend their own churches. Coupled with our TV and radio ministry, it has been an honor to serve in helping meet our community's spiritual needs. Thanks to all our volunteers who have continued to work throughout this pandemic to make the livestreams possible every Sunday without interruption.

Additionally, our network infrastructure was robust enough to accommodate all staff working from home during the lockdown and participating in Microsoft Teams and Zoom meetings up to the present. These things were largely made possible by the seemingly mundane tasks of keeping our equipment up to date (we installed new network switches/storage, replaced aging laptop/desktop computers) and updating our software services (we upgraded to Microsoft Office 365 last year). Thanks to Ryan Landis for his diligence and expertise as our network administrator; he played a key role in all of these areas that helped the ministry meet the needs of our staff and congregation.

Before the virus changed things, we had one large and very visible change in the sanctuary: one of our video wall projectors stopped working irreparably. After several weeks of only one video wall projector, we installed two new projectors which are brighter and sharper than the old ones. This improved the clarity of the lyrics and readings for the congregation, as well as making the videos and image magnification (IMAG) easier to see for those in the back. Special thanks to our Chief Engineer Mike Montgomery who has done a lot of extra work integrating the new projectors and implementing many other audio/video devices and services this past year.

Some new features were introduced this year due to the pandemic. One was the children's church video that has been added to the service during this time without children's Sunday school. We hope the children have enjoyed this addition to our service and that it has prompted further family discussion about the topics discussed. Another new feature was our outdoor service each Sunday at 8:30 during the summer. Since we've had many outdoor events in the past, we already had most of the equipment needed to support an outdoor service. We did add a new low-power FM transmitter to provide further sound support, as well as a couple of rented speakers to cover a wider area. We were blessed with good weather for most Sundays this summer, only having to cancel twice for rain.

One area we don't often think about our media ministry reaching is those who are incarcerated. We recently received a letter from a local inmate who expressed how much he appreciated our televised worship services, how they ministered to him personally, and most notably, how he hoped to reach his fellow inmates as a result by holding Bible studies and inviting them to watch the worship services together. It's a blessing to have a part in reaching and encouraging those in prison with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

This past year, the Campus Outreach ministry at Grace:

- Decided to have a Virtual Summer Mountain Project (VSMP) rather than an in-person Summer Mountain Project (SMP). Our numbers for SMP had been steadily increasing the three years prior. We had 120 students sign up and 100 of them stuck with it throughout the Summer. One of the real blessings of the VSMP is that it was easy entry for our Mexican student leaders who wanted to be a part of it. It really fueled our efforts there.
- Continued to evangelize many students on campus up through mid-March. Once the restrictions from COVID began to be put into place, our evangelism on campus slowed down. Most of the students on our campuses was sent home (or at least away from the school) for the second half of the spring semester. Also, most of our students come from non-Christian families and many of their parents are hostile to the gospel. Therefore, we encouraged the students to see this as an opportunity to evangelize their parents and siblings. See one story of this from Victor Nuilah below, he is a student from our ministry in Guadalajara.
- Sent two staff families up to Michigan to begin our launch into the western part of that state.

For the upcoming year:

- We hope to spend the year concentrating our efforts on developing the leadership that God has given to us. He has blessed our campuses with lots of fruit. It will be difficult for our staff and students to evangelize many people this fall in light of the restrictions the schools have in place. These restrictions won't preclude us from developing teaching, training, and having D-groups & one-on-one meetings with student leaders. Our hope is to develop greater maturity among our leaders so that when the restrictions begin to lift on campus, we will have a broader base of leaders – more mature leaders.
- We hope to hire one full-time staff member to Mexico and one intern for Mexico. We hope to transition four staff members to join with the two staff members we already have sent to Michigan. This will make 2021-2022 the true launch year for Michigan. One of the best things about this is that most of these staff already have support as well as lots of ministry experience.
- We hope to develop a formal partnership with Christ Church in Grand Rapids as the church hub for our expansion into Michigan. Right now, we have a one-year interim agreement with them that is going exceedingly well.
- We hope to have 60+ students on an in-person summer project. Dollywood re-opened and all signs point a likelihood that we will be able to get our students hired for summer work.
- We have an anticipated budget of \$1.73M. This includes all three facets of the Campus Outreach ministry: Illinois, Michigan, and Mexico.

Before Victor became a Christian, he lived a wild life. To give one example from his life, Victor got very drunk, got behind the wheel of his car with his friends inside, and flipped it going over 100mph. Eventually he began to look for answers and to change his life. One of his friends, Cesar, had been evangelized by our Cross-Cultural Project in Guadalajara. Cesar was now a Christian and began talking to Victor about Christ. Victor became a Christian and immediately wanted his parents to become Christians. First, he began evangelizing his mom. He began to clean the house, iron his parent's clothes, and many other things to serve them. One day he asked his mom if they could

CAMPUS OUTREACH

read the Bible together and she said, “Yes!” He read John 3 about Nicodemus and the need to be born again. His mom began to break and said, “I have sinned against God. I was blind to it but now I see it. What do I need to do?” When Victor told her to repent and put her faith in Christ she was amazed. She told him she wanted to do it alone and three days later she told him that she asked for forgiveness and put all her faith in Christ to save her.

Victor’s dad began to realize that Victor and his mom were really different and he didn’t like it. He began to get very angry at them. He began to attack Victor’s faith very directly - “You Christians are stupid. You Christians believe in fairy tales.” His father told Victor that he didn’t want to change and to leave him alone. Victor recognized the importance of what his dad had just confessed and said, “So dad, you believe the Bible has the power to change people?” His dad replied, “Yeah, I know it does because you and now your mom are a completely different people and I know this is going to change me so I don’t want to read it because I don’t want to change.” His dad began to be violent and aggressive, screaming a lot at Victor, telling Victor that he was stupid and that he was garbage. One day his dad began to yell and scream at him for a simple mistake at their home and Victor said he was sorry for it and asked his forgiveness. His dad left the house but came back shortly and told Victor, “I hate the fact that you are a Christian. I hate that fact that you are always helping everybody and always doing all these things for people. I hate the fact that you pray about everything. I just hate the way you are.” His dad paused and then said, “But I am wrong, son! I am the one with the problem! I am the one treating you in a bad way. I am so sorry, son! Please forgive me!” His mom shared the gospel with his dad and told him of his need for Christ.

Victor’s dad became a Christian.



During this fiscal year, we have seen and heard that “Aslan is on the move” (Jesus is at work and His kingdom is advancing). If that phrase is unfamiliar to you, we encourage you to read *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C. S. Lewis. These classic stories would be a great read during this pandemic.

The first five months of this fiscal year were strong financially and in ministry before life changed abruptly in March. Isolation, social distancing, and no church fellowship gatherings became the norm. People’s faith has been challenged as they experienced fear, anxiety, and job loss. But God has not changed, nor has He left us. He continues to love us and pour out His grace upon us.

The world around us may seem to be in chaos right now, but God was not surprised by this pandemic, nor was His kingdom’s advance hampered. He continues to break down strongholds where the enemy once had power through the gospel’s transformation of lives. Our Global Partners have found people hungry to hear the Good News and have found creative ways to communicate it. Our Global Partners will testify to you that God’s purposes have not been thwarted by COVID.

Many people are being born again through saving faith in Jesus because of the faithful witness of our global partners locally and around the world. Be encouraged! God is at work.

We are deeply grateful for each of you who have prayed for and financially supported missions at Grace Presbyterian Church. We were able to support 67 individual and family units, our Global Partners, locally and internationally. Our global partners are very grateful for all of you who prayed for and connected with them throughout the year. You are a blessing from God!

In addition to supporting our global partners, we gave to the general fund of 20 ministry organizations. These organizations advance God’s kingdom among the poor, homeless, orphans, foreigners, students, youth, and children. We also supported our denomination, the new church plant in Springfield, and Unlimited Grace Media.

This year’s Global Impact Celebration certainly looked different than in years past. Our featured speaker, Geordon Rendle, was unable to attend in-person due to international COVID restrictions. Instead, he was able to pre-record his messages which were live-streamed and broadcast at the various services. Many were blessed by the worship services, Geordon’s messages, and being able to talk to our global partners via Zoom. Despite our limitations, we were still able to connect with our global partners, and they were able to share how God is working globally.

We started the fiscal year with an \$80,368.84 balance and finished the year with a \$104,156.13 balance. The quarantine resulted in less money being spent on activities such as mission trips, camps, and the Global Impact Celebration as compared to a normal year. Because of current and future financial uncertainties, we were careful to disburse only \$445,666.71 for this fiscal year. This was because we need to be able to sustain our long-term commitments to our global partners and ministry organizations and to support those who are currently preparing to go on the field.

THANK YOU! Your financial support and prayers have enabled the Kingdom of God to advance throughout the world through our Global Partners and Ministry Organizations. Aslan is on the move!

CHURCH VITAL STATISTICS • 2019-2020

Church Membership Totals



As of October 1, 2019	1990
Additions	
• Professions of Faith	23
• Reaffirmations of Faith	6
• Certificates of Transfer	<u>23</u>
TOTAL ADDITIONS	+52
Removals	
• Dismissals	259
• Transfers	1
• Death	<u>43</u>
TOTAL REMOVALS	<u>-303</u>
As of September 30, 2020	1739

Baptisms	
Infant	13
Adult	<u>6</u>
TOTAL	19

Members At Home with the Lord

Bugg, Robert	January 19, 2020	Landerdahl, E. Kay	February 26, 2020
Cole, Leona	June 14, 2020	Leman, Cora	January 13, 2020
Cormany, Robert	June 10, 2020	Leman, Douglas	October 31, 2019
Craig, Bradford	June 9, 2020	Lipps, Ewald	June 4, 2020
Dempsey, Myron	October 10, 2019	Lipps, Leslie	January 15, 2020
DeWitt, Ralph	September 21, 2020	Meinen, Donald	October 15, 2019
Dinkins, James	April 6, 2020	Nash, Wendell	May 8, 2020
Ekhoff, Ruth	April 19, 2020	Raeuber, David	February 12, 2020
Fierce, Barbara	April 13, 2020	Sanders, Dwight "Doc"	September 6, 2020
Fleming, Helen	October 16, 2019	Schmidgall, Jacob "Joe"	July 29, 2020
Fox, Richard	November 22, 2019	Schoch, Nancy	August 10, 2020
Garber, Leslie "Les"	November 20, 2019	Seppelt, Clark	November 9, 2019
Glasford, Bonnie	January 19, 2020	Smith, Merle	December 11, 2019
Gordon, Phillip	May 7, 2020	Speck, Vaughn E. H.	July 21, 2019
Hoard, Aldona	July 14, 2020	Strickler, Spencer	August 16, 2020
Holzinger, Catherine "Kay"	August 3, 2020	Sweety, William	March 8, 2020
Hunt, Callie "Lois"	May 29, 2020	Tipton, Robert	April 18, 2020
Hurd, Kathryn "Kay"	September 17, 2020	Windhorst, Lela	August 29, 2020
King, Alberta	July 21, 2020	Worner, Meredith	April 27, 2020
Kuntz, Norman	August 25, 2020	Zimmerman, Florine	January 7, 2020

Members Previously At Home

Aderman, Donald L. Sr.	August 20, 2018
Fox, Joseph	April 2015
Ruhman, Louise	December 1, 2018

**Receipts Comparison
2019/2020 with 2018/2019**

	<u>2019/2020</u>	<u>2018/2019</u>	<u>over/(under) 2018/2019</u>	<u>% over/(under) 2018/2019</u>
Church Ministries	2,903,622	3,033,857	(130,235)	***
10% Tithe to Missions	(290,362)	(303,386)	13,024	***
Misc. Donations & Activity Income	822,111	731,996	90,115	12.3%
10% Tithe to Missions (Holiday Offerings)	<u>(9,845)</u>	<u>(10,129)</u>	<u>284</u>	<u>2.8%</u>
Sub-Total	3,425,526	3,452,338	(26,812)	(0.8%)
Donations from Television, Radio & Internet Viewers	19,366	44,529	(25,163)	(56.5%)
10% Tithe to Missions	290,362	303,386	(13,024)	***
10% Tithe to Missions (Holiday Offerings)	9,845	10,129	(284)	(2.8%)
Misc. External Income	50,564	43,661	6,903	15.8%
Cash Reserve Fund	176,261	28,949	147,312	508.9%
TV Estates	<u>1,296</u>	<u>1,852</u>	<u>(556)</u>	<u>(30.0%)</u>
Sub-Total	3,973,220	3,884,844	88,376	2.3%
Donations for Debt Reduction	<u>395,279</u>	<u>687,539</u>	<u>(292,260)</u>	<u>(42.5%)</u>
TOTAL RECEIPTS	4,368,499	4,572,383	(203,884)	(4.5%)

**October 2019 - September 2020 Actual Expenses
VS.
October 2019 - September 2020 Budget**

	<u>Oct. 2019 - Sept. 2020 Actual Expenses</u>	<u>Oct. 2019 - Sept. 2020 Gross Budget</u>	<u>% Spent</u>
Current	2,369,520	2,452,631	96.6%
Communications	117,577	112,992	104.1%
Deacons' Fund	27,070	27,200	99.5%
Christian Education - Children	34,488	58,165	59.3%
Christian Education - Adult	4,586	8,830	51.9%
Christian Education - Womens Ministry	39,188	50,905	77.0%
Miscellaneous Ministries	79,071	89,183	88.7%
"Living in Grace" Church Conference	6,109	7,465	81.8%
Youth Ministry	21,819	58,575	37.2%
Campus Outreach (Grace's Portion)	86,500	86,500	100.0%
Young Adult Ministry	6,586	10,871	60.6%
Music Ministry	122,753	100,340	122.3%
Hospitality/Assimilation	<u>70,615</u>	<u>100,423</u>	<u>70.3%</u>
Sub-Total	2,985,882	3,164,080	94.4%
 Property Development:			
Church Improvements	0	0	***
Church Interest Expense	<u>1,054</u>	<u>10,620</u>	<u>9.9%</u>
Total Property Development	1,054	10,620	9.9%
 TOTALS	 2,986,936	 3,174,700	 94.1%

October 2019 - September 2020 Budget VS. October 2020 - September 2021 Budget

	<u>Oct. 19 - Sept. 20 Gross Budget</u>	<u>Oct. 20 - Sept. 21 Gross Budget</u>	<u>Increase/(Decrease) Over Oct. 19 - Sept. 20 Gross Budget</u>	<u>% Inc./(Dec.) Over Oct. 19 - Sept. 20 Gross Budget</u>
Current	2,452,631	2,462,109	9,478	0.4 %
Communications	112,992	117,580	4,588	4.1 %
Deacons' Fund	27,200	42,000	14,800	54.4 %
Christian Education - Children	58,165	48,840	(9,325)	(16.0)%
Christian Education - Adult	8,830	7,940	(890)	(10.1)%
Christian Education - Womens Ministry	50,905	40,090	(10,815)	(21.2)%
Miscellaneous Ministries	89,183	90,240	1,057	1.2 %
"Living in Grace" Church Conferences	7,465	7,110	(355)	(4.8)%
Youth Ministry	58,575	123,305	64,730	110.5 %
Campus Outreach (Grace's Portion)	86,500	86,500	0	0.0 %
Young Adult Ministry (YAMS)	10,871	9,178	(1,693)	(15.6)%
Music Ministry	100,340	74,362	(25,978)	(25.9)%
Hospitality/Assimilation	<u>100,423</u>	<u>89,290</u>	<u>(11,133)</u>	<u>(11.1)%</u>
Sub-Total	3,164,080	3,198,544	34,464	1.1 %
Property Development:				
Church Improvements	0	1,661	1,661	***
Church Debt	<u>10,620</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(10,620)</u>	<u>(100.0)%</u>
Total Property Development	10,620	1,661	(8,959)	(84.4)%
TOTALS	3,174,700	3,200,205	25,505	0.8 %

CURRENT ACCOUNTS October 2019 - September 2020 Budget VS. October 2020 - September 2021 Budget

Current Accounts:	<u>Oct. 19 - Sept. 20 Gross Budget</u>	<u>Oct. 20 - Sept. 21 Gross Budget</u>	<u>Increase/(Decrease) Over Oct. 19 - Sept. 20 Gross Budget</u>	<u>% Inc./(Dec.) Over Oct. 19 - Sept. 20 Gross Budget</u>
Administrative Expense	1,827,353	1,842,723	15,370	0.8 %
Cleaning Service	102,140	104,972	2,832	2.8 %
Conference - Finance Director	200	200	0	***
Conference - Sr. Staff	1,000	1,000	0	***
Conference - Support Staff	500	500	0	***
Egive - Administrator Fees	10,000	1,380	(8,620)	(86.2)%
EGive-Usage Fees	13,325	13,000	(325)	(2.4)%
Insurance-Church	31,200	32,384	1,184	3.8 %
Legal & Auditing	11,600	9,810	(1,790)	(15.4)%
Maintenance - Building	46,398	46,432	34	0.1 %
Maintenance - Equipment	45,344	46,135	791	1.7 %
Miscellaneous	14,460	13,350	(1,110)	(7.7)%
Operating Equipment	500	500	0	0.0 %
Operating Equipment-Copier Leases	26,235	32,784	6,549	25.0 %
Postage	8,510	8,734	224	2.6 %
Printing	23,020	21,314	(1,706)	(7.4)%
Real Estate Taxes	923	1,015	92	10.0 %
Stormwater Utility Fee	16,300	16,300	0	***
Supplies-Custodial	16,740	17,778	1,038	6.2 %
Supplies-Kitchen	2,100	2,000	(100)	(4.8)%
Supplies-Office	18,000	16,000	(2,000)	(11.1)%
Transportation	21,783	21,798	15	0.1 %
Utilities-Church	<u>215,000</u>	<u>212,000</u>	<u>(3,000)</u>	<u>(1.4)%</u>
TOTALS	<u>2,452,631</u>	<u>2,462,109</u>	<u>9,478</u>	<u>0.4 %</u>

Capital Improvement Funds

	<u>Cash Reserve Fund</u>	<u>Growth</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Balance on Sept. 30, 2019	560,983.08	26,978.90	587,961.98
Receipts	176,261.17	403,929.67	580,190.84
Transfers	1,734.39	0.00	1,734.39
Additional Debt Payments	0.00	(280,339.92)	(280,339.92)
Other Expenditures	<u>(145,219.39)</u>	<u>(1,291.92)</u>	<u>(146,511.31)</u>
Balance on Sept. 30, 2020	593,759.25	149,276.73	743,035.98

Line of Credit Balance as of September 30, 2019	280,339.92
Principal Payments	<u>(280,339.92)</u>
Line of Credit Balance as of November 13, 2019	0.00

Praise the Lord for He is Faithful !!

**October 2019 - September 2020
Missions Fund Activity**

\$80,368.84	Balance in Missions Fund as of October 1, 2019
<u>Income</u>	
\$290,362.43	10% Tithe from "Church Ministries" Donations
9,845.30	10% Tithe from Holiday Offerings
132,301.69	Extra Donations Specified for Missions
0.00	Income from Missions Conference
154.00	Aluminum Can Recycling Proceeds Given to Black Buffalo Ministries
200.00	Income from Glen Oak Good News Club Ministry
615.00	Income from Cuba Missions Ministry
0.00	Income from Cuban Pastors Fund
0.00	Income from Mexico Missions Trip
2,490.00	Income from Zambian Village Fund
32,505.58	Donations from Sunday School Classes/Organizations (Incl. \$150.00 in Memorial Transfers)
10.00	Miscellaneous Income
<u>970.00</u>	Transfers from Memorials
\$469,454.00	

<u>Expenses</u>	
\$286,775.00	Monthly Missions Support to Individual Missionaries
75,624.00	Monthly Missions Support to Organizations
33,326.50	Annual & One-Time Gifts
0.00	Graduate Student Financial Aid
1,150.06	Expenses from Missions Conference
154.00	Aluminum Can Recycling Proceeds Given to Black Buffalo Ministries
175.34	Expenses for Glen Oak Good News Club Ministry
0.00	Expenses for Cuba Missions Ministry
7,404.00	Expenses for Zambian Village Ministry
134.41	Expenses from Mexico Missions Trip
5,356.24	Miscellaneous Expenses
3,061.58	Fees for Electronic Donations Received
<u>32,505.58</u>	Sunday School Classes/Organizations Donations to Missionaries/Mission Organizations
\$445,666.71	

\$104,156.13 Balance in Missions Fund as of September 30, 2020

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