

Annual Report 2021

Please see the slide show that accompanies this report for a visual record.

Prepared for the Annual Meeting – January 9, 2022 of

Grace Church in the Mountains, Waynesville, NC

**Celebrating that Christ is all and in all by
Inviting ~ Seeking ~ Belonging ~ Serving ~ Reverencing God's Creation**

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Senior Warden Report

This past year has been such a challenge for our church family. We went from having only online services, to outdoor services under the tent, to having all events while we are wearing masks. Our community dealt with the virus in various and sometimes controversial means. In addition, Haywood County saw record flooding in the eastern part of our county and the unfortunate deaths.

Yet Grace Church continues to grow and to assist our community in both their spiritual and physical needs. We have expanded our online streaming for our services. We have increased our membership and our stewardship campaign has been successful.

We have been so fortunate to add Madison Owen to our staff. We made some renovations to our Grace Church with the retaining wall and have started our Sacristy expansion.

These items could not be possible without the generosity of each of you. With your financial giving and your wonderful time and talent, we continue to grow.

As a member of the Vestry, it has been such a humbling learning experience. The ability of this group as individuals and as a group is awe inspiring. Thank you for your trust and prayers as we continue to move forward. God Bless You!

Submitted by: Dale McDonald

Rector's Report

Our annual meeting, reviewing 2021, coincides with the Feast of the Baptism of Jesus. This year, year C in our three-year lectionary cycle, we read from the Gospel of Luke about a very intimate and public moment. When Jesus prays, the heavens open up, the Holy Spirit descends upon him like a dove, and the Father tells him: "You are my son, the Beloved, with you I am well-pleased." This story contains the wonder of our Christian life: in our Baptism, we come to share in Jesus' life and the Father tells each of us, first in Baptism and then reaffirms week by week in the sacrament of Holy Communion, that we, too, are beloved, and with us God is well-pleased.

As I look back over this year – our second full year of living through the pandemic – I see evidence of God's favor toward Grace Church, of our belovedness. And I see evidence of our eager response to the Father's generous love....the reciprocity of divine love flowing between heaven and

earth, human and divine, this “mortal life” and eternal life. Together, as GRACE CHURCH, we have participated in that flow.

One way the Church articulates this flow of divine love is through our Baptismal Covenant, which we will recite today as part of our worship. After the questions of “trust,” in which we affirm our belief in God as Trinity and hear again of God’s faithfulness to us, we are asked five questions of “promise.” The questions of promise offer a template for how we might respond to being God’s beloved in daily life. So this “annual report” and homily is organized as responses to how we’ve done our best to fulfill the Baptismal Covenant over the last year through God’s grace and the steady shaping of our lives – individual and communal – into greater Christlikeness.

1. Will you continue in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in the prayers?

Teaching continued with Sunday Forums, lectionary Bible study, book studies, a catechism study, a Bible study on the Psalms, a study on five classical Lenten observances & confirmation preparation. Significant Christian formation also occurred in the two Spiritual Direction groups that meet monthly.

We managed to “fellowship” outside as much as possible. We had “Fresh Air Fellowship” at Cataloochee in the Spring, and ice-cream social in May, and a few senior lunches when infection rates were low in the Summer. Many small groups figured out ways to continue meeting either online or outside or spread apart including youth group, the Marthas, Mid-Life Women’s group, sisters of Grace, and Pub theology. We resumed the monthly Gathering Service in September which is followed by a meal.

We have been faithful in our worship. January through March we worshipped online only and supplemented our worship with “drive through communion.” We spent much of the year worshipping outside under a large tent. Our prayer ministry continued both on Sundays and through our Congregational Prayer Team and our Wednesday Eucharist. Members of Grace started a regular monthly Taizé service to add a contemplative dimension to our worship offerings. We had a Quiet Day in August at Lake Logan.

2. Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

Week by week we offer corporate confession. I continue to meet with individuals for pastoral counseling and spiritual direction, some of which involves repentance and nearly always involves a desire for returning to or growing closer to God.

This year about 15 people engaged in a six-week workshop on forgiveness which I led. We studied scripture, deepened our understanding of forgiveness and engaged in a process that helped us move toward forgiving someone who harmed us so that we can be freer to love.

3. Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

I pray we are faithful in this week-by-week and day-by-day, both through our worship and through our ministry of service to the community. One testimony to this is the continued growth in membership in our church.

As your rector, I believe that my involvement in the broader community is part of the Grace Church's proclamation of the Good News. This year I completed three-year terms on the REACH board and the Lake Logan Board. I also completed an 18-month commitment to the Town of Waynesville's Homeless Task Force. I completed a 3-year term as Dean of the Western Deanery of our diocese.

This year, 2022, I am the president of the Diocesan Standing Committee and involved with a diocesan Leadership Task Force. I remain on the Client Services Committee for REACH and also lead a weekly prayer service at Bethel House, which is a hospitality house on South Main St for those who are unsheltered.

4. Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

This happens day in and day out at Grace Church and in the lives of our members. The Outreach portion of our annual report goes into great detail about how we seek and serve Christ in all persons. I want to give special thanks for the steady faithfulness of our Food Pantry volunteers and also for our ministry helping one special family who lives in Grace House (our former Rectory) as they seek to move beyond generational poverty and transition from homelessness to housing stability. This kind of inter-personal ministry is challenging and transformational for those called and willing to engage with it.

5. Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

I've always felt this question overlaps with the question above – if we see Christ in another person, I hope we respect their dignity! However, this question has a 'systemic' orientation, as justice and peace are collective, social goods. One way that we've lived into this is through our financial support of Episcopal Relief and Development which empowers people around the world, supporting and developing their ability to live with greater dignity. We donated to Episcopal Relief and Development twice this year – once with proceeds from our Endowment earnings and again in response to this summer's natural disasters.

On a local level, we affirmed the dignity of our neighbors in Canton and Cruso whose property was damaged and/or destroyed by Tropical Storm Fred. Many of those most affected by the floods were living in trailers. Grace generously responded to my request for financial support which has been and continues to be dispersed through two means: the Canton Missional Network and my personal connections with victims and flood relief efforts. I currently sit on the county's Unmet Needs Committee, which disperses funds for unmet needs for flood victims using funds from Canton Missional Network and the United Way. Additionally, I was a key organizer in the community's response to Spanish-speaking flood victims, many of whom were migrant farm workers. I'm so grateful for the many Grace Church parishioners who made lunches and offered hospitality for flood survivors in Cruso and mentored an immigrant family through FEMA, etc.

And all of this was done – lest we ever forget or are tempted to take "credit" – with God's help!

I am eager to see how we will continue to receive, give and participate in the great flow of God's divine love in 2022 and am ever so grateful for the Vestry leadership and each member's stewardship of their time, talent and treasure that makes our collective ministry possible.

To all of this and to what God has in store for us in the year ahead, we say "Amen, amen!"

In addition to the homily for today above, I'd like to acknowledge with gratitude our staff members who continue to serve faithfully, adapt, and join us in stewarding the incredible gifts God has bestowed on Grace Church: Andrea Croskery (parish administrator), Dawna Keilman (nursery supervisor), Tony Caldwell (sexton), Ginny Moe (director of music) and Madison Owen (parish programs). Grace is blessed by their presence.

Faithfully,

The Rev. Joslyn Ogden Schaefer
Rector

~~~ Worship ~~~

Music

Like others activity, choir members are understandably cautious and uncomfortable with masks, and the music program has tried various responses to the Covid pandemic. We have missed those who cannot sing with us, but many have assured us that their absences are temporary. Those who have been able to sing in the choir have worked hard and led us ably in the services, and most were even able to sing at two Christmas Eve services. We owe them a big thanks for their leadership. In addition, some of our youth and children as well as adults have occasionally participated musically, playing instruments and our new choir chimes. Music is used in the Taizé and Gathering services as well as Sunday morning. From time to time, volunteer musicians have participated in the Taizé services, and as these services grow, more musicians will become involved. Some highlights this year have been the multi-church music group at Confirmation at Lake Logan, the instruments who added so much on All Saints, the children playing jingle bells and choir chimes, and the instrumentalists and adult choir at the three Christmas Eve services. I thank the Vestry and Staff for all their work and support for all the programs of Grace Church.

Respectfully submitted: Virginia (Ginny) Moe

Sing a New Song Hymnal Supplement Project: Additionally, the Rector, Music Director and others have been working on a hymnal supplement project that will make it easier for Grace to expand its hymn repertoire to include contemporary and folk-type hymns that are not included in The 1982 Hymnal. This project launched in January 2021, and we hope to have it published in 2022.

Altar Guild

We are blessed and very thankful for our wonderful and devoted Altar Guild teams. All have quickly adapted to all the changes over the past months which has been trying times for everyone.

We look forward to sharing our ministry with anyone interested in becoming a part of this special ministry. We are very limited in our membership at this time, so please consider this ministry as the Altar Guild is only sustained by its members.. We look forward to a better 2022.

Submitted by: Melanie Walt

Special Services: In September 2021, we resumed our monthly (3rd Sunday at 5:00 pm) contemporary-style service The Gathering, which is usually followed by a pot-luck meal. These services are based on spiritual themes and incorporate poetry, scripture, conversation, and contemporary music. The attendance has been sparse. We have committed to these through May of 2022 and then will re-evaluate moving forward.

In August, a group of lay leaders, working with staff, launched a monthly *Taizé service*. About 20 people have been attending and this is meeting a community need for contemplative lay-led worship.

~~~Congregational Care~~~

Congregational care continued despite COVID, of course. The ministry is divided into three teams: visits and assistance; prayers, cards and calls; Eucharistic visits. We have also had a group of volunteers who agreed to prepare meals for individuals in crisis or transition.

The Rector took on the bulk of visitations due to COVID with support from the Congregational Care leadership team of Maureen Hunt, Joyce Brooks, Iris Durrell, and Kent Clary. We held a Eucharistic Visitor training in November and re-ignited that ministry. We commissioned the following Eucharistic Visitors: Kathie Johnson, Madison Owen, Mary Hartman, Chris Smith, Dcn. Carter Smith, to supplement our existing Visitors Maureen Hunt and Joyce Brooks. We are grateful to Kent Clary who coordinated this ministry for the last two years and has stepped away. Congregational Care also offered a Grief and Hope class in October.

We give thanks for the team of folks who offer confidential prayers, write cards, and stay connected with those in need.

~~~ Parish Programs ~~~

Charge: Create welcoming spaces for all people to encounter “the loving, liberating, and life giving God” through study, storytelling, fellowship, and prayer.

Standing Committee Members: Madison Owen, Kathie Johnson, Mary Lockey*, Mariah Nehus*, Tiffany Plemmons, Marie Shaginaw, Rob Viau *= Vestry Liaison*

The biggest blessing of 2021 for Parish Programs is the June hiring of Madison Owen as Programs Director!

Adult Formation

Members: Tracy Anders, Georgia Crowder (Y), Stephen Hattendorf, Maureen Hunt, Michael Lodico, Karen Morris, Earle Pratt, Madison Owen, Mary Lockey

Lectionary Bible Study: We are a small group meeting in the church library on most Sundays at 9:15 to seek everyday truths in the lectionary scriptures. All are welcome.

Submitted by Dan Linker

Sunday Forum: Despite the pandemic, many inspiring and intriguing topics were offered during the 9:15 Sunday Forum hour. Sessions were offered in person, when deemed safe, and on Zoom. We also offered a weekly lectionary bible study on zoom. Topics included:

- Advent 2020 - Handel's Messiah led by Michael Lodico and Kathleen Vogt
- Jan 17th - God and the Pandemic led by Joslyn
- April 25th - May 2nd - What is God Calling Us to?
- May 9th - 16th - Book of Common Prayer led by Joslyn and Bob Stambaugh
- June 6th - 27th – Book study with Orion: The Singer, by Calvin Miller
- July 4th - Meet Madison!
- July 11th - Parish Fair as Ministry led by Laurel Destry and Pat Robinson
- July 18th - Helping Hands of Haywood
- August 1st – How the Myers Briggs Type Indicator Can Influence Worship led by Mary Lockey and Pat Robinson
- August 8th – film study, “God is the Bigger Elvis” discussion led by Michael Lodico
- August 15th - 29th - The Way of Love: Confirmation Prep led by Joslyn+
- Sept 5th - Greening of the Kitchen led by Laura Armour, Mary Lou Daily and Donna Buckner
- Sept 19th - Ministry Fair
- Sept 26th - October 31st – Forgiveness Workshop led by Joslyn
- Nov 7th - All Saints
- Nov 14th - Labyrinth with Marlene Hyatt
- Nov 21st - Heroin(e) Documentary discussion led by Michael Lodico and Maureen Hunt
- Advent 2021 - *All Creation Waits* book study led by Emily Chatfield-Lusto and Susan Williams

Weekday Formation:

“Catechism and Coffee” in the Spring led by Fr. Orion and the Rector

Psalms Bible Study - led by the Rector

Grief & Hope class – led by the Rector

Group Spiritual Direction – facilitated by the Rector

Sisters of Grace

We zoomed until May and then enjoyed meeting together in our homes once again. Our studies included: "Stories Jesus Still Tells" by John Claypool, "Dusk, Night, Dawn" by Anne Lamont and "Preparing for Christmas" by Richard Rohr. We completed our year by adopting a Pathway's family and enjoyed a Christmas get together!

Submitted by Mary Lou Daily

Women's Mid-Life Group

The Women's Mid-Life Grace group continued to enjoy monthly fellowship and discussion on a range of topics related to the complexity of midlife throughout 2021. We have a weekend retreat planned for April 2022.

Submitted by Caroline Denwood

Pub Theology

In 2021, Pub Theology met monthly until October with lively discussions. We are on hiatus now until February, when we will meet on Zoom, followed by live meetings starting in March at the Blue Ridge Beer Hub **EVERY SECOND TUESDAY**.

Submitted by Rob Viau

Arts Ministry

Members: Berry, Bradley, Walter Denning, Elaine Dohms, Jim Dohms, Stephen Hattendorf, Marlene Hyatt, Michael Lodico, Carol Ploch, Richard Ploch, Rob Viau, Marie Shaginaw

- Prayer flag project at homecoming event (May)
- 2 plein air events
- Labyrinth road trip (September)
- Cloud of witnesses (All Saints Day, November)
- Marie made beautiful signs for the Parish Fair

Newcomers

Members: Natalie Bayless, Diane Collins, Chas Lawrence

- Luncheons held for at least 50 newcomers in July and November

Special Events

Members: Kathie Johnson, Donna Buckner, Kent Clary, Diane Collins, Georgia Crowder (Y), Mary Lou Daily, Walter Denning, Carol Feichter, Stephen Hattendorf, Christy Maloney, Karen Morris, Pat Robinson

- Planned and coordinated meals at all Gathering services
- Coordinated Sundaes on Saturday
- Managed box lunch orders for Confirmation at Lake Logan service
- Coordinated ice cream social at the Blessing of the Animals service
- Managed Potluck after Greening of the Church

Teresa of Avila Chapter of The Daughters of the King

President: Mary Lou Daily

Vice President: Linda Miville

Treasurer: Donna Buckner

Secretary: Betsy Stecher

Two of our members have moved, Betty Miner because of health reasons has moved to Knoxville, TN to be near her family. Louisa Lunt has moved back to Ormond, FL.

We are happy to welcome Sherry Edwards and Carol Feichter who have joined DOK this year.

We continue to organize and prepare receptions for families after funerals and memorial services and are very appreciative of a group of Grace women who help us with this ministry.

Attendance at our meetings has been limited due to covid protocols and members inability to meet on Saturdays. Several meetings have been cancelled. We are looking at Zoom meeting possibilities in 2022.

We meet when possible in the Library on the second Saturday of each month. We hope to add to our membership this year.

Children, Youth, & Family

Members: Madison Owen, Asia Clarke, Georgia Crowder (Y), Dan Linker, Marie Shaginaw, Karen Morris, Elias Schaefer (Y)

Formation for children and youth returned September 26th of this year. Godly Play for little ones up to 2nd Grade with Dawna Keilman, and Youth Hangout for third grade and up led by Daniel Yeargin and Madison Owen.

Our Youth Group in partnership with St. Andrew's in Canton has continued to grow this year. Highlights from the year include:

- Monthly Youth Group meetings
- Garden Work Days
- Overnight retreat to the Hinton Center in Hayesville, NC
- Tubing at Deep Creek
- Hiking in Smoky Mountain National Park
- Helping with flood relief clean up
- 6-week Sunday afternoon formation: Baking with the Bible
- Leading the Gathering Service in November
- Our first ever (to our knowledge) Youth Group Lock-in!

Children and Family activity highlights:

- Interactive Story Time with Asia Clarke
- Family Fellowship at Cold Mountain Corn Maze

We look forward to this new year of continuing to build relationships with our Children, Youth and Families at Grace.

Staff Report

Since joining the staff in June of 2021, I have worked with the Children, Youth and Families Ministry, Parish Programs, Congregational Care Team, digital ministry, and so much more. Despite the covid precautions in place, I have witnessed how excited these groups have been to be together again in comparison to last year. Relationships between the youth and the parents are growing closer with offerings like Youth Group and fellowship opportunities. Parish Programs have provided spaces for us to eat together again (something we all missed so much last year). And Congregational Care has restarted its commissioning of Eucharistic Visitors out into the community so that we can make sure all of our members are receiving the bread and wine that make us into one body in Christ. Digital Ministries like streaming was not my forte when arriving at Grace, but through some research and learning by trial and error, I hope that the live streamed services and Zoom formation opportunities bring connection when there are times that we cannot be physically together.

I am thankful to have been an addition to the staff this year and look forward to what is to come.

Madison Owen
Director of Parish Programs

~~~ Outreach ~~~

Charge: To enable our hands to be God's hands in caring, comforting and advocating for God's people beyond our door

Standing Committee Members: John Turley, Pat Robinson, Laurel Destry, Paula Welling, Pam Nolte-Viau, Laura Armour, Natalie Bayless, Vicky Gribble, Dana Smith

Grace House – Our Transitional Housing Ministry:

In April 2020, just as the Pandemic began, we welcomed Sara and her three children to live in the former rectory, now known as “Grace House” to work toward self-sufficiency and in partnership with a non-profit called EACH (Ending Area Child Homelessness). The EACH organization dissolved in December of 2021; however Sara and her family remain at Grace House with the support of our Grace House team. Grace House Volunteers include Kara Melius (who offered outstanding budget coaching), Janine Geenen (coordinator), Barbara Rowe (who assisted with logistics and childcare), Barbara Jo White & Stephen Hattendorf (who helped with occasional child enrichment activities), Mary Lockey and Mary Hartman (who both advised Sara on career decisions), Asia Clarke (who provided speech therapy and coaching with ADHD challenges). The team is also working with Sara on developing a plan to find permanent affordable housing possibly through a USDA loan.

Community Service Projects:

Outreach was very busy in 2021, and we plan to be even busier in 2022. In Haywood County food insecurity affects around 20% of our population. That means 1 in 5 people wonder where their next meal will come from or try to “stretch” their food supply to cover their next meal. At Grace we address food insecurity in three ways.

First, our pantry and little pantry.

The Food Pantries at Grace Church continue to serve our food insecure neighbors in Haywood County.

In our Pantry, volunteers follow MANNA Covid guidelines for masking and physical distancing. Monday through Friday mornings from 10:00-11:00, families come to the covered deck during warmer months or follow arrows down the hallway during the colder months to a service table where volunteers welcome them and offer them a variety of staples, eggs, meat, and produce.

Since December 2020, our neighbors have also had 24/7 access to the ***Little Grace Pantry*** off the Miller Street driveway. Pantry volunteers stock it with staples and personal hygiene products. This year the pantry received generous donations from Ingles and Food Lion as well as from parishioners, Smoky Mountain Retreat residents, and Andy and Tammy Sloan. These donations supplement the food that we order from MANNA.

Second, by serving meals at Pathways:

Grace volunteers, though limited to 3, due to Covid, continue to prepare and serve meals. *A rotation schedule of volunteers is needed to help prepare meals at Pathways in 2022.*

The Freezer/compressor was broken at Pathways, and the cost of repairs would be \$5,000. Outreach stepped up and the committee offered to match up to \$2500 for repairs. The full \$2500 was given to Pathways. Grace also offers Pathways a designated monthly allowance to help with their overhead.

Third, by helping with food distributions.

Since the beginning of the pandemic Grace has volunteered and supplied food for pop-up food distributions. These are no contact and COVID safe drive-thru food box giveaways. They are held twice monthly in conjunction with MANNA (our regional food bank), the Pigeon Center and First Methodist Church.

This year we also held a school supply/backpack giveaway along with a food distribution in August. In November we participated and donated to the third annual "Turkey Jam" in which Outreach donated \$500 for turkeys. Over 200 families received holiday food boxes and turkeys for Thanksgiving. This event was a group effort by the downtown Waynesville churches. It was a wonderful way for us to come together and serve our neighbors in need!

In addition, Outreach gave \$1000 split between Within Reach, the Sugar Plum Project and Waynesville Middle School/Tuscola High

Grace helped canvass as well as assured up to 100 food boxes were prepared in Thatcher Hall by volunteers once a week in September to be delivered and handed out to those in need in Cruso.

Also, a very effective Empty Bowls project which helped to benefit Pathways raised \$14K.

Last but not least, Warming Ways, where Grace collected winter coats, scarves, mittens and gloves for those in need delivered to the Canton Baptist Church!

Great By Eight: Child Literacy

On our committee we have a volunteer, highly trained as an educator and special needs teacher who has offered to tutor children through a consortium of local churches, mostly centered in Canton. Back in June, 1200 books for K-2nd grade had been collected. The ministry is sponsored by the Methodist Church called Congregations for Children (C4C) that the Outreach committee became interested in. This group maintains a list of churches and what schools they support. C4C is currently in practice at Meadowbrook Elementary and utilized adult "reading buddies." But during Covid it's been difficult to develop a volunteer reading program at area schools.

In addition, Grace now has a "donate a book" space in the 24/7 pantry that has been very successful!

Martha's:

Martha's has expanded its mission in 2021 and has a vision for growing into the community even further in 2022. The pandemic has them in "*zoom mode*" and some find Zooming unpalatable or difficult are inactive. The core group participated in the Ministry Fair and built bridges between other groups outside the Grace parish. The Smoky Mountain Knitting Club have collaborated with us on knitting hats for people undergoing cancer treatment as well as for distribution through Mountain Projects. The Prayer Shawl Ministry group at First United Methodist Church help make and provide projects to warm our community friends in need. We regularly plan, make, donate shawls and blankets in celebration of new Grace parish babies and graduates. More than 25 blankets; over 100 scarves/cowls and more than 200 hats have been given away. We have no numbers for the fun, joy and celebrations of God's grace, just words: continuous, astonishing and immense.

Parish-wide Fair: Helps with annual summer outreach projects.

Grace Church, through a window of opportunity due to Covid, was able to sponsor our community fair, featuring "good as new" items for sale to the public, with 100% of the profits being given to 12 area non-profits! Actual fair sales of \$12,000 plus generous donations increased our gift giving to \$20,500! We were able to provide more than 10 booths, serviced by 100 parish volunteers. The newly

created Creation Care brought in several outside organizations and we were fed by St. Andrews Holy Smokes Barbeque. By the grace of God, it was a “win, win” for everyone.

Creation Care:

The Creation Care Ministry was formed in 2021 at Grace and covers all three of our standing committee ministries; Outreach, Parish Programs and Administrative. Outreach efforts in 2021 included becoming covenant partners to the Creation Care Alliance of Western North Carolina, a network of people of faith and congregations who have united around a moral and spiritual call to preserve the integrity, beauty and health of God’s creation.

This ministry, along with the covenant partners locally and across Western North Carolina, offered prayers for creation during the COP26 conference and began an interdenominational prayer service the first Friday of each month at Grace. Efforts were begun to work with the community to remove obstacles to solar installations, as well as explore better ways to recycle and compost.

A partnership with Haywood Waterways Association and the Revitalization of Traditional Cherokee Artisan Resources (RTCAR), resulted in a grant for Camp Henry for the planting of river cane to be harvested by Cherokee artisans for basket weaving and other traditional crafts. River cane is also important as a streamside barrier that keeps erosion in check.

Please read the attached for more information on accomplishments in 2021 and plans for 2022.

Activities:

Invited parishioners to conduct a personal inventory via a 5-week eNews series called “Becoming a Creation Care Household.”

- Became a covenant partner in Creation Care Alliance of Western North Carolina. Met with First United Methodist Creation Care team to discuss planning collaborative events as covenant partners in CCA.
- Planned in collaboration with kitchen team leaders an Adult Forum presentation called “Greening Grace Kitchen” to share intentions with parishioners on improving our energy use, and product selection, including Equal Exchange coffee--to be more environmentally sustainable. Equal Exchange coffee is a Fair Trade product, and they sell directly to congregations to help support small coffee farmers in Central America.
- Consulted with Champion Supply company owner to determine which cleaning and paper products we can purchase to reduce waste and to use environmentally sustainable products.
- Conducted a complete energy and water use audit of the church at no cost via Waste Reduction Partners in Asheville. The same engineer who did an audit in 2011 conducted this one. Bob Vogt, Chair of Building & Grounds, organized the implementation of the audit report’s suggestions, primarily by selecting LED replacements superior to existing lights at the church. In addition, he plans to purchase “green” cleaning products from Champion Supply when our current inventory of products is finished.
- Applied to be a pilot church to screen a film, Hidden Rivers of Southern Appalachia, and to use the reflection guide created by a Sewanee professor. Funding for the project was provided by a Creation Care grant from the National Church. Grace Church was selected as a pilot.

- Collaborated with a member of Vine of the Mountains and FUMC to share a 12-day series of prayers for creation during COP26. This prayer email series ends Saturday, Nov. 13th.
- A partnership formed with Haywood Waterways Association, the Revitalization of Traditional Cherokee Artisan Resources (RTCAR), and the Western North Carolina Climate Action Coalition resulted in the submission of a grant in the name of Camp Henry for one of ten national grants given out by the Episcopal Church to make reparations for environmental racism. Camp Henry was awarded a grant of \$23,000 that enables the planting of river cane to be harvested by Cherokee artisans for use in keeping alive the art of basket weaving and other traditional crafts. A curriculum developed by personnel from Camp Henry and the Museum of the Cherokee Indian will teach campers about Cherokee culture as well as native pollinators that will also be planted. Signs will be installed to explain the importance of this indigenous plant that played such an important part in our region's culture and its importance as a streamside barrier that keeps erosion in check. Liturgical services at the site of the plantings will also be conducted.
- Created a Creation Care component to the annual parish fair by featuring the Grace Giving Garden and invited other churches and organizations to participate.
- Supplied reusable bags featuring the Grace logo to those purchasing items at the parish fair.
- Developed a 4-week lesson plan for an Advent Book Study with the book *All Creation Waits: The Advent Mystery of New Beginnings*. Susan Williams & Emily Chatfield-Lusto are leading this series, which began November 28th.
- Established a monthly Creation Care Prayer group, to be offered to the community the first Friday of each month in the sanctuary of Grace, 12:00 – 12:30, beginning Dec. 3rd. Prayers will offer gratitude and praise for God's Creation along with petitions for restoration and healing of the planet.

Ongoing

- A member of the Creation Care Ministry (a rotating task) writes a weekly Creation Care column for eNews. Creation Care members attend in-person events and/or Zoom meetings as scheduled by Creation Care Alliance of WNC.
- Researching composting options for disposable food service items used at church potlucks and other events involving large gatherings with food served.
- Following progress on grant funding for rain garden behind the church
- Following progress and planning, as it develops, for a possible labyrinth installation at church.
- Supporting the Western North Carolina Climate Action Coalition in their efforts to educate the public via displays on the harmful effects of plastic and styrofoam, establishing an Environmental Advisory Council for Haywood County, and supporting the Youth Conservation Corps.

Planning Phase

- Scheduling the pilot screening of *Hidden Rivers of Southern Appalachia* during Grace's winter Sunday film series. The one-hour film + reflection guide, developed by a theologian at Sewanee, will be offered. In collaboration with FUMC Creation Care, Grace Church will host Dr. Anna George, biologist with the Tennessee Aquarium for a second screening at the FUMC gym in February and invite the larger community, including Haywood Waterways, French Broad Riverkeepers, WNC-CAC, and Creation Care Alliance members.
- Gathering information on solar installation for the roof of the church. Have discussed the policy with the Town of Waynesville and with two different solar contractors to learn more. Continuing to learn more about the restrictive town policy for 3-phase meter installations (which the church has) so as to be eligible for a variance or change in the policy. Meeting with town alderman and solar contractor to explore project options.

Planning, along with FUMC Creation Care as co-host, and Creation Care Alliance as registrar and sponsor, a day retreat in summer 2022 at Lake Logan on the theme of "Contemplation in Nature for Care of Creation." This event will feature forest bathing, meditation, journaling, artistic expression, storytelling, support and inspiration circles, as well as time for solitary enjoyment of lakeside trails.
Submitted by: Susan Williams, Emily Chatfield-Lusto

Grace Giving Garden

In response to the challenges of two years of living with COVID-19 and all the environmental crises increasingly damaging our earth, Grace Giving Garden volunteers have grown in spirituality and commitment to stewardship. Along with other members of our parish and local, national and international communities, we have become more aware of our planet and the interconnections of all life on earth. As a result, our commitment to creation care has deepened. We are even more devoted to education, especially of our youth and of everyone who may just be waking up to climate crisis and creation stewardship. Both our accomplishments and future roadmap reflect this growth.

Completed in 2021

- Revised mission statement to reflect creation care and inclusiveness: to steward creation as we grow and share God's bounty in fellowship and learning with all.
- Began a ministry to provide altar flowers and bouquets for all occasions; created a bulb and cutting bed along the Grace House drive on the church side
- Spent \$450 of our \$750 budget
- Became more systematic in soil testing and composting
- Participated in the Parish Fair by offering perennials and information about the Giving Garden and Creation Care
- Held our second annual Candy Roaster Pie Giveaway with the Food Pantry
- Initiated devotionals to begin each garden day
- Gardened twice with First United Methodist Youth and Camp Henry Youth
- Involved 30 out of 60 interested volunteers in garden activities
- Connected more solidly with the Creation Care Committee by seating two GGG steering committee members on the CC Committee
- Grew, harvested and donated produce for the Food Pantry

Proposed for 2022 - We plan to:

- Forge alliances with area agencies, churches and gardens who seek to model and support sustainable/green living
- Involve more area youth and children in our garden
- Host a Creation Care Fair with the Creation Care Committee
- Plan and work as a committee, rather than run under a single chairperson
- Develop curriculum packets for easy teaching by beginner volunteers as well as seasoned teachers
- Create a walking meditation path with plants and signage
- Create and print a trifold brochure on the GGG to be used, for example, in a countywide tour of ecological spaces
- Host a movie night
- Erect a bug and a bat house and paint all metal railings
- Become a certified National Wildlife Association Sacred Space
- Be a venue for Master Gardener Volunteer Association and other interested groups to teach, either with GGG volunteers or separately

Submitted by: Mary Alice Lodico – Emily Chatfield-Lusto

GGG Flower Ministry:

Formed in October 2021 to provide flowers for home visitations and the altar, the Grace Giving Garden Flower Ministry created 87 bouquets in the last 3 months of 2021. In October the flower ministry was formed, to make bouquets and altar flowers primarily from the gardens at Grace supplemented by purchased flowers in the winter months. Bouquets are put together on Saturday mornings by a group of Grace members. People who wish to provide Altar flowers may request that the Flower ministry make them. The suggested donation is \$25, which will help this ministry be self-sustaining so it will not need additional funding. A beautiful shelf has been built for the Grace Hallway which allows Grace members to pick up bouquets to take to parishioners. There is a clipboard with a sign out sheet to indicate to whom the flowers are being taken.

The Flower Ministry also has provided floral arrangements for church events such as the Newcomers Lunch and Senior lunch. Bulbs were planted this fall for use this spring and Grace Giving Garden and the ministry will plant additional flowers for Flower Ministry use later next year. Our 2022 goal is to use the resources from the GGG gardens, the church grounds and our own backyards to continue to create and share beautiful flower arrangements for visitations and the altar and to provide fellowship in the process.

Submitted by Janet Turley

2022 Outreach Priority Projects to Consider: Lunch Ministry with Open Door; House repair for the elderly: Work days Building a Habitat home and/or Workday at Pathways. Social Issues: Forums on Affordable Housing and Childhood Literacy.

Respectfully submitted,

Vestry Liaisons:

Laurel Destry

Patricia Robinson

Laura Armour

~~~ Administration ~~~

Charge: To Oversee parishwide stewardship of our resources: grounds, buildings, IT infrastructure, and finances (which includes developing and monitoring budgets and meeting reporting requirements and overseeing the endowment)

Members: Walt Austin (Treasurer), Gary Walt (Asst. Treasurer), Michael Lodico*, Lauri SoJourner*, Dale McDonald*, Marlene Hyatt, Melanie Walt, Bob Vogt

The new standing committee structure established by the Vestry in 2021 involved setting up an Administration Committee, consisting of the combination of the previous Finance and Building & Grounds committees. The committee also was charged with oversight of various administrative issues, largely in an advisory capacity to the Rector. The ministry role of the committee is officially to “support and advise the Vestry in the stewardship of parish resources: grounds, buildings, IT infrastructure, and finances.” The specific areas of ministry include the audit team, stewardship, endowment, staffing, collection counters, check-signers, memorial garden, pet wall, lay weeders, handy-person projects, overseeing vendor & maintenance contracts, and IT infrastructure. Members of the committee included the Vestry chairs (Dale McDonald, Lauri Sojourner, Michael Lodico), Robert Vogt, Marlene Hyatt, Melanie Walt, and treasurers Walter Austin and Gary Roberts.

Finance

We welcomed Gary Roberts as Assistant Treasurer, who assisted Walter Austin, who has just completed the second year of his three-year term. Andrea Croskery, our parish administrator, assumed full responsibility for bookkeeping duties. We are grateful to all three for their hard work on the often invisible tasks that make the day-to-day operations of our church possible.

The Administration Committee appointed an Audit Committee during the summer to conduct the annual review. The audit was led by Peter Nurse, assisted by Judy Dykes, Gene Sloan, Robert Schmiel, Laura Armour, and Michael Lodico. The committee provided several suggestions for improvement of Grace’s financial processes. The committee also presented a letter to the Vestry asking that the diocese review its protocols for parish audit committees.

The Administration Committee oversaw numerous vital but humble tasks throughout the year, e.g., counting weekly collections, updating our insurance coverage, managing our endowment funds, and evaluating the service from our online donation provider,

Buildings & Grounds

Specific achievements this year include the following:

- Continued careful maintenance of the grounds, led by Les and Julie Taylor, whose commitment to tending our trees, in particular, has been invaluable. Others have been involved in regular grounds maintenance include Dan Linker, Donna Buckner and Mary Lou Daily.
- An ambitious, multi-year project to put a rain garden behind the church with the assistance of grant funding.
- The dedicated work of Robert Armour in his maintenance of the Memorial Garden. *N.B.:* Robert would love some help going forward.
- Completion of a necessary foundation reinforcement project for the Sacristy, as well as plans for Sacristy expansion, the latter complicated by the shortage of labor.

- An Energy Audit conducted by an outside group, which will provide guidance for more efficient use of energy over the next several years.
- Preliminary exploration of the possibility of solar power.
- New shades in the choir room completed by the expert hands of Betty Bradley and Marlene Hyatt.

In 2022 the Administration Committee will be looking for additional collection counters, Memorial Garden caretakers, grounds workers, technology gurus, and participants in *ad hoc* “handy-person” projects.

The Vestry chairs of the committee (Lauri Sojourner, Dale McDonald, and Michael Lodico) wish to thank all who participated in the many projects during 2021. Despite many challenges, this has truly been a growth year for Grace Church in the Mountains.

Submitted by: Michael Lodico, Junior Warden

Staff Report

The office has been somewhat busier this past year than during 2020. We happily witnessed the return of volunteer receptionists who now have a lovely new desk to sit at and their own laptop to use which has been a tremendous help! We are currently in need of a reception volunteer who can work each Monday from 9am -1pm and is somewhat familiar with using a computer. Training will be given so no need to worry.

A big shout out too to the check signers and collection counters. The collection counting forms got an overhaul and retraining is taking place.

Thanks to everyone for helping the office at Grace run more smoothly! Thanks also to Tony Caldwell, our Sexton, who helps keep the physical plant of Grace running smoothly!

Submitted by: Andrea Croskery

~~~ Membership Statistics ~~~

Confirmations:

Dave Crowder, Sue Volgas, Christopher Wells,

Receptions:

Clyde Austin, Megan Carpenter, Mary Beth Dorgan, Amanda Hill, Jesse Nelson, Bobby Schmiel, Tracy Bahm, Kim Cort & Mike Cort

Baptisms:

Sofia Ann Meadows

Marriages:

Martha Sharpe Bradley and Daniel John Weemhoff

Burials:

Anne Crocker, David Miller, Elizabeth Clark, C. A. "Tony" Sexton, Harriet Retter, David Felmet, Jr., William "Bill" Smith

Other Deaths of Members:

Sallee Glaesner, Kim Campbell

New Members:

Amanda, Julia, Christopher & Hannah Wells

Roger Thomas

Tracy & Diana Bahm

Jesse Nelson

Gene Sloan & Robert "Bobby" Schmiel

Kim & Mike Cort

Judy Dykes

Laura & David Willis

Amanda Hill

John & Georgia Raines

Bob Patillo & Kathy Hiler

Deborah & Michael Boss

Marion & John Klingler and Carolina Mitchell

Sofia Ann Meadows

Kelly & Stephany Semones

Lynne and Don Noonan

Carter and Christine "Chris" Smith

Vicki Shaw & Cameron Wright

Monroe Moore