

Grace Church in the Mountains



2018 Annual Report

Annual Meeting – Sunday, December 2, 2018, 9:15 am



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Rector's Report

Grace Church has been blessed with another year together amid the “changes and chances of this mortal life,” as the Prayer for Protection in our prayer book says. Your vestry chose to re-affirm for a second year the missional priorities first articulated in February 2017. These priorities grew out of the parish-wide discernment process you undertook in the process to call me to serve as your 22nd rector. They are:

- 1) **To grow in mutual love for one another specifically by improving our ability to communicate across difference.**
- 2) **To develop a vibrant ministry to children, youth, and young adults.**
- 3) **To cultivate a culture of “welcoming” that engages each person’s spiritual gifts.**

This year, with God’s help, we continued to respond to God’s call in each of the three areas. As a way of framing my report, I’d like to offer one vignette illustrating each priority.

The first priority, loving one another by communicating across differences, is an extremely challenging one because it rubs against our natural (and sometimes sinful) inclinations to judge one another, to over-simplify complex situations by dividing into two sides, and to assume whatever ‘side’ we are on is ‘right.’ As a parish, we have experienced some conflict this year which generated hurtful gossip and indicated a great need for compassionate listening. However, as I reflect on that prayerfully, I am assured that the Holy Spirit has enabled us to stay knitted together and given us opportunities to show our love by seeking forgiveness and to practice taking responsibility for our own feelings. Our communication guidelines, now posted in meeting rooms throughout the parish, offer us ways to disagree without blaming, shaming, or attacking one another. In a mysterious way, I also think the several deaths we mourned together as a parish, gave us the gift of perspective. I’m reminded of the blessing I’ve prayed over you at the end of worship: “Life is short. We do not have much time to gladden the hearts of those who walk this way with us. So be swift to love. Make haste to be kind. And the blessing of God Almighty....”

The second priority, developing a vibrant ministry to children, youth, and young adults, has been such a joy to pursue and is bearing fruit. On a recent Saturday, dedicated members of our Buildings and Grounds Committee were preparing to install our new refrigerator and freezer. It just so happened that our newly chartered Cub Scout Troop was meeting at Grace that day. The Cub Scout dads lent their hands and heads to the effort of trading out our old refrigerator for the new one. We had our second year with a young adult intern, Madison Owen, who brought many gifts to our community. Under her leadership, we began a Children’s Chapel during the summer, which has continued on a semi-monthly basis thanks to the leadership of Larry Davis, Barbara Jo White, Mabel Curnow, and Lorelei Yerse. We also held our first-ever

intergenerational Vacation Bible School in partnership with St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. And, our Outreach Ministries, especially through the Grace Giving Garden and the Episcopal Church Women's support of the Pathways Center, have focused on improving the lives of children in Haywood County.

The image that comes to mind for me for the third priority were the five baptisms we celebrated this year. Parishioners ranging in age from two months to seventy-five years were baptized in our radiant Narthex. This image is complemented by another one from our liturgy: the day before our longest-term parishioner Bob Breese died, the sun reflected off of our butterfly sculpture and cast a beautiful array of light and shadow on the large cross in the chancel. New life and light is sprouting up all around us, and we are continually opening our hearts to welcome all of its forms.

Last year, I ended the letter with my intention to work more closely with the Outreach Committee and to establish an ad hoc Financial Visioning Committee. I have done so and am grateful for the patience and good humor of both those committees as we have been working together through important, healthy change. Next year, I will continue working with the Finance and Outreach Committees, but expect that will decrease as I direct more focus toward equipping more of our members to provide sensitive, pastoral care to any member in crisis or facing a life transition. I will also be focusing on stewardship, as the three-year program led by our assisting priest, the Rev. Orion Davis, has concluded.

On a final note, I wanted to share other aspects of my ministry with you, as your support makes these possible, and I hope also benefits our mutual ministry. I began a two-year term as the Dean of the Western Deanery in the Diocese. I serve on the Disciplinary Board for the Diocese and REACH board here in Haywood County. My continuing education this year included attending the Festival of Homiletics and participating in a Leadership in Ministry cohort. I've been invited and have contributed sermons for the Sermons that Work website for the national church and served on a team that authored the Ethics Question for the General Ordination Exams. Next year, I will begin serving on the Lake Logan Board, as well as on the Diocesan Standing Committee.

With deep gratitude for each of you and awe at the ways you care for one another reflecting Christ's love,

Joslyn+



Administration/Personnel/Staffing

This has been a year of transitions for our staff. Right after Christmas we said goodbye to our Director of Music, Kathy McNeil, as she took a position at First Methodist Church. After a six-month search (and with the hard work of our Organist Search Committee, chaired by Marlene Hyatt), we hired Charles Banks. We give thanks to Lillian Pearson who regularly substituted for us. We also said goodbye to Peter Zinglersen, our Sexton *Emeritus*, and now have a contract with a janitorial company that is providing dependable service. Paula Brandt, our Communications Administrator, left in early April for another job. In May, we hired our Interim Communications Administrator, Sarah Yeargin. Our Bookkeeper, Alyson Nelson, resigned in July after several years of dedicated service to Grace Church. Sarah's role expanded to include basic bookkeeping in August and her title changed to "Interim Parish Administrator." Sarah will return to residential undergraduate studies after December. Ms. Dawna Wade will be joining the staff on December 3rd to fill this role. We are also very grateful to Fred Deeb for going above and beyond in his Treasurer duties as we transitioned the bookkeeping role into the Parish Administrator role.



Finance

Crystal Clary, Vestry Liaison

Fred Deeb, Treasurer

Grace Church's fiscal ministries experienced some transition, as well as continuity.

The **Finance Committee** met monthly under Fred Deeb's leadership. Members of the Finance Committee included Sara Tyburski, Mary Lou Daily, Bob Vogt, Jim Moore, Tony Sexton, and Bob Tope.

Bill Collins coordinated our **annual audit** with the help of the following audit team members: Marlene Hyatt, MaryAnn Sinagra, Paula Eachus, Sandy Curtis, Chas Lawrence, and Ann Rothermel. The Vestry has agreed to enter into a contract with a local CPA firm to conduct a procedural review of our 2018 books, as it is a good practice every few years to bring in a professional.

Capital Improvement Loan Update: We now owe about \$90,000 for the new roof and other capital improvements made in 2016. We pay \$991 per month (principle and interest) and aim to pay an additional \$17,000 per year if we have the ability to do so, in order to pay off the loan in five years and avoid refinancing. (The loan was a five-year ARM loan.)

The fiscal transitions this year related to recommendations from the Rector's *ad hoc* **Financial Visioning Committee** that were approved by the Vestry. Members of that

committee included Fred Deeb (Parish Treasurer), Mary Lou Daily (former Senior Warden), Kevin Wells (banking professional), Tony Sexton (Endowment Committee Chair), Crystal Clary (Vestry Liaison for Finance and Administration), and Orion Davis (Assisting Priest).

The Vestry gave the visioning committee a four-part charge. Highlights from the committee's recommendations are listed below each charge:

1) **Develop guiding principles for raising & spending money.**

Stewardship is about trust. Trust that God is the source of all good things. Trust that God provides the Church with the resources it needs to accomplish God's mission through its members giving. Trust among church members and clergy who demonstrate a "foretaste" of God's Kingdom by offering a portion of their resources to pursue God's purpose in and through the particular ministries of a parish. And above all, trust that **God trusts us** to be good stewards and grants us the gifts and graces required for the task.

With trust as the foundation, we propose three guiding principles for the parish's raising and spending of money: **simplicity, transparency, and flexibility**. Each of these principles contributes to the others. We will be transparent, so that members can easily understand how their money is used for ministry. We will aim for simplicity, so that a variety of member can provide leadership in this area and easily understand our reports. Flexibility is important so that the elected parish leadership is able to direct resources as needs and priorities shift.

The Vestry made the following commitments based on the committee's recommendations:

- A balanced budget developed based on members' annual financial commitments.
- A budgeting process that requires justification from committees for their requests.
- Designating that year-end budget surpluses go into the Vestry Reserve Fund.
- Minimizing financial "asks" so that members can plan their giving accordingly. Eliminating special parish-wide offerings through the year (such as United Thank Offering, Theological Education Sunday, Diocese of Jerusalem, ERD Theological Education Sunday, Diocese of Jerusalem, Episcopal Relief & Development) and instead have the Vestry designate donations for such causes from the "ministry beyond the parish" section of the budget. In this way, the entire parish contributes through our collective stewardship.

- Minimizing the number of restricted funds to enable elected parish leadership, the Vestry, to allocate resources based on discerning the present needs and priorities of the parish. If restricted funds are developed, they should be created through an act of the Vestry with a specific time limit. After the time limit, any remaining restricted funds should be placed into the general Vestry Reserve account.

2) Develop Financial Priorities (including a comprehensive calendar that coordinates stewardship education and fundraising for operating budget, endowment, and capital expenses; clear messaging strategies to parish).

The Vestry has agreed to implement the following processes:

- Offering monthly reports tracking expenses for each committee's areas of responsibility (budget lines).
- Explicit approval from the Vestry for Committees that go over their allocated budget.
- Regular posting of Operating Budget on bulletin boards and annual viewing of designated funds by entire parish.

3) Review and recommend changes to finance- & stewardship-related committees (structure, purpose, composition, terms, and leadership).

The Vestry agreed to have the Endowment Committee's responsibilities be split. The Finance Committee will offer oversight for the Endowment's investments, and the Stewardship ministry will be responsible for educating the parish about making gifts to the Endowment.

We give thanks to the following members who served on the **Endowment Committee**: Jo Phelps, Prescott Lunt, Laurel Destry, Tony Sexton, & Bob Buckner.

The Vestry is in the process of revising its by-laws to clarify expectations around committee purposes and leadership rotation.

4) Simplify day-to-day financial operations.

The Vestry is working with the Treasurer and Bookkeeper to continue simplifying our operations, which includes nuts-and-bolts changes like using a payroll service, consolidating restricted funds, and revising the segregation of duties between the Treasurer, Bookkeeper, Wardens, and Rector.



Fellowship

Linda Deeb, Vestry Liaison

Fellowship at Grace Church includes the activities of the Fellowship Committee, the Episcopal Church Women (ECW), the Men of Grace, the Marthas Knitting Guild, the SEW Graceful quilting and sewing group, Graceful Hikers, coffee hours, the Welcoming Committee, and the Summer Dinner Bunch.

The Fellowship Committee communicated via emails throughout the year and hosted five coffee hours: the Bishop's visit in January, Easter in April, Mother's Day in May, Father's Day in June, and Veterans Day in November. The Fellowship Committee also coordinated the Super Bowl Chili Cook-Off and Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper in February, the Pentecost International Potluck in May, and the Celtic Cèilidh party in October, and we will host the trimming of our Christmas tree in Thatcher Hall and our Christmas Party Potluck in December.

The Men of Grace, coordinated by K. G. Watson, met on the first Saturday of each month during 2018 for breakfast and friendly discussion. The Men of Grace were the hosts for the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper in February. Additionally, the Men of Grace were Parish Fair volunteers for the "heavy lifting" opportunities in July. In April, they donated to Grace Church AED cardiac resuscitation equipment located in the Parlor and provided church member AED training.

The Marthas Knitting Guild met weekly on Thursday mornings during 2018 for friendly discussion and then lunch promptly at 12:00 noon. The Marthas made "Matt's Caps" and afghan blankets for Mountain Projects clients, items for the Grace Church Warming Tree, and prayer shawls for church members and friends.

The SEW Graceful group of passionate quilters met once a month on Saturday at the church. Every other year the group makes a queen-sized quilt to raffle at the Parish Fair. This year, they created four smaller quilts for that purpose. All levels of quilters are welcome and group members are always happy to help with their knowledge and experience. Check the church calendar for the sewing dates.

Graceful Hikers, coordinated by Pam Nolte-Viau, met and hiked during months the weather permitted in 2018. The hiking trails selected were varied and enjoyed by all. The group is very congenial and enjoys observing flowers and fauna on the trails.

The Summer Dinner Bunch was very active summer 2018 with 80 persons participating in meeting and eating at other church members' homes thanks to the organization and coordination of Betty Smith.

Additional Grace Church Fellowship events included activities of the **Welcoming Committee**, led by Paula Welling, who hosted **Noontime Noshings** on the third Monday of each month and quarterly **Newcomer Meet-Ups** for dinner and discussion

usually at a restaurant, the **First Friday Potluck Dinners** at different church members' homes, and the **Parish Picnic** held at the Sextons' farm in August.

The Episcopal Church Women (ECW)

Mary Lou Daily, President

The first Grace Church ECW meeting of 2018 was held in March to begin organizing committees for the Annual Tablesapes Luncheon held in September and to discuss plans for a new "Christmas Cookie Walk" project to take place in December. The luncheon was enjoyed by all and profited \$2,000.00 to benefit Haywood Pathways Center. We will be holding our first Christmas Cookie Sale on December 15th. All proceeds from our projects go to benefit Haywood Pathways Center (our chosen ministry). All women of Grace are automatically members in the ECW group. Please look for announcements of our quarterly breakfast/business meetings. All are welcome.



Buildings and Grounds

Mary Lou Daily, Vestry Liaison

Bob Vogt, Chair

2018 was a year of transition for Buildings and Grounds as we dealt with the retirement of long-time Sexton, Peter Zinglersen. While the routine cleaning of our building was quickly assigned to an outside service, all the "behind the scenes" tasks that Peter performed fell to Buildings and Grounds. A B&G Task Force was created with volunteers who were eager to help when asked. These "behind the scenes" tasks included seasonally revising the wording on the Grace sign, replacing lightbulbs, hanging plaques on our Memorial Garden Wall, adjusting timers for the change in season and Daylight Savings Time, building an insulated cover for the Giving Garden cistern valves, and much more.

The most exciting project began in October as we sought ideas and made plans for our "kitchen redo." Discussions took place, other church kitchens were visited, plans were created, vendors were vetted, estimates were reviewed, and Vestry approval was obtained. In January, B&G volunteers will prepare the kitchen for the updates. The new refrigerator and separate freezer have already been acquired and allow our Congregational Care Committee to prepare and safely keep more meals for parishioners they serve. In January we expect new stainless-steel counter tops, a garbage disposal, a commercial dishwasher, and a new floor. 2018 has been an exciting year.



Congregational Care

Mary Hartman, Vestry Liaison

Pam Davis, Chair

The Congregational Care Team consists of members of our parish who want to offer care to the members of our church family. If a member indicates an interest on the time and talent section of the stewardship card, a member of the Congregational Care Team will contact them. Opportunities to serve include: writing cards to members who are experiencing events needing support or joyful recognition, preparing meals for members in time of need and organizing dates and delivery of meals, visiting parishioners, and providing transportation for church events and medical appointments. Last year the team sent approximately 250 cards and made approximately twenty-five visits.

All of our activities are under the guidance of the Rector. We depend on good communication between church members and the committee. We strive to remember our missional priority to grow in mutual love for one another specifically by improving our ability to communicate across difference. We follow strict guidelines of privacy and respect.

The team is in need of active members. Please contact Pam Davis or the church office if you would like to know about opportunities to serve.

Eucharistic Visitors

Coordinated by Dn. Ray Escott

Maybe you have experienced our service of “Sending Forth” our Eucharistic Visitors with a travel case prepared for sharing Holy Communion with our homebound or hospitalized members. We have a small, dedicated group of EVs including Linda Deeb, Gretchen Tope, Connie Mozelewski, Donna Buckner, Cathy Simons, and Kent Clary.

Along with Joslyn+ and Dn. Ray, our Eucharistic Visitors have made approximately 140 visits this year either in homes, hospitals, or care facilities. For more information, please contact Dn. Ray or the Rector.

Daughters of the King

Betsy Stecher, President

The St. Teresa of Avila Chapter of the Daughters of the King at Grace Church in the Mountains is part of an international order of women in the Episcopal, Lutheran, and

Roman Catholic Churches. Our mission is in the form of a vow to pray for our parish and Rector, to pray daily for people on our own prayer list, and to provide service to the church in any way that would assist the Priest. This past year our most noticeable service was to provide eight receptions following funerals held at Grace Church. Our prayer list is recreated each month, and each of us prays daily for every person named. Parishioners are encouraged to ask us to include family or friends in need of prayer.

Currently, there are seventeen chapter members who are identified by the unusual silver crosses we wear. At meetings on the second Saturday of each month, we study biblical lessons, spiritual literature, and other writings to support our mission. Our activities in 2017-18 incorporated all of these components.

Interested women of Grace are encouraged to contact President Betsy Stecher for more information. We enthusiastically welcome potential members at all times.

Order of St. Luke

Elaine Dohms, Coordinator

The Order of St. Luke members are in church to pray with you. This short time with a member or two is a healing experience whether praying for a loved one or for you. You are encouraged to experience this wonderful offering of loving care. Members are present in the Narthex once a month on the second Sunday.



Education/Formation

Rob Viau, Vestry Liaison

2018 has been a very good year for Christian Education/Formation at Grace in the Mountains. Our contribution to all three Missional Priorities, particularly numbers 1 & 2, has been significant. Adult Forums, Deck Discussions, and Graceful Conversations have provided a year-long opportunity for members of the church to engage in thoughtful and reflective discourse, often about our differences, in a friendly and non-threatening environment. Pub Theology, now in its second year, has the potential to push conversations across lines of difference a little further, and to perhaps also attract a younger segment of the church community inside and outside of Grace Church.

Since her arrival, Joslyn+ has offered a steady stream of activities that have provided many opportunities for spiritual growth and learning—far too many to name—and has demonstrated that her potential to lead and guide us as Christians is vast. She has been nothing less than an inspirational leader and a blessing to Grace Church in the Mountains.

Perhaps most significantly, the program of education for youth and young adults is now fully operational, with new classroom space to prepare us for expected increases in the number of young people we serve. Our teachers, materials, and classrooms are in place: we now only await the children and youth, but we are confident that they will come. New to Grace in the past few months is the Journey to Adulthood (J2A) Program, which provides Christian education for our high schoolers. This past summer, under the leadership of our young adult intern Madison Owen, our first Vacation Bible School was a grand success, pulling together many of our teachers, youth, and volunteer parishioners. This three-day program was amazing!

Without a vibrant Youth/Young Adult Education Program, we cannot grow into the future and create and sustain the kind of Grace Church in the Mountains we would like to become.

The following include SOME of our annual offerings for Christian Education/Formation:

- Adult Forum programs
- Library and parish reads
- Education for Ministry (EfM)
- Children's and youth programs
- Graceful Conversations
- Deck Discussions
- Pub Theology
- Special seasonal programs (Advent, Lent, etc.)
- Special educational and devotional studies/spiritual programs (Thomas Group)
- Young adult summer internship

Finally, we have begun to prepare for *Icons in Transformation*, the exhibit coming to Grace Church in the Mountains this April 28th through June 16th. *Icons* will bring to our church family many opportunities for growth in several areas connected to fellowship and education. Susan Williams expressed this beautifully in a recent Adult Forum presentation on the exhibit. *Icons in Transformation* will provide:

- 1) An opportunity for personal spiritual growth and transformation through contemplation and presence, with the icons as "windows" through the veil of everyday reality.
- 2) An opportunity to develop and strengthen our beloved community within our parish family, with the work that this will require as a means to practice being many members, one body.
- 3) An opportunity to open our church to the community at large, to seekers of various kinds: art-lovers, the curious, the faithful, and the "nones" (those who have no religious affiliation).



Stewardship

Crystal Clary, Vestry Liaison

The Stewardship Committee completed its third year in a three-year cycle with an educational, spiritual exploration of how we are called to use all the resources of our life to the Glory of God. Fr. Orion Davis led seven stewardship gatherings in the month of October. Thank you to the Stewardship Committee (Laurel Destry, Kathleen Vogt, Kent Clary, Michael Lodico, Harriet Simmons, Bill Simmons) for their three years of dedication to Grace Church. The committee has compiled the Time and Talent portion in a spreadsheet and the Vestry will use this information to ensure parishioners have the opportunity to take part in ministries at Grace Church in the Mountains.



Outreach

Linda Sexton, Vestry Liaison
Michael Lodico, Chair

The Outreach Committee engaged in five main activities in 2018. They are as follows:

- 1. Research:** The Outreach Committee embarked this summer on a study of what “Outreach” really means. Committee members studied scriptural passages, examined what other churches were doing, and opened eyes and ears to the needs of our own community. Some of the results of the study are available on the Grace website, <https://www.gracewaynesville.com/resources.html>.
- 2. Expenditures:** The Outreach Committee was charged with spending \$7000 to “ministries outside the walls” of Grace Church. This was in addition to the annual Diocesan Assessment, plus \$1000 to support the Food Pantry and \$1000 to sponsor the Cold Mountain Music Festival that is the major fundraiser for Lake Logan. The \$7000 was spent as follows:
 - To support the Grace Giving Garden (the Vestry charged the Outreach Committee with providing funds for this very important ministry): roughly \$1200. (An additional \$500 for the GGG was provided through a generous grant from the Mountain View Garden Club.)
 - Starting in July, the Outreach Committee provided a monthly donation of \$200 to support Haywood Pathways adult emergency shelter. This decision

was in response to the request by Pathways that churches designate 1% of their operating expenses to support the shelter.

- The committee spent \$2700 to the Open Door to provide two months' worth of emergency shelter for women and children in crisis.
- \$750 was spent to support a program for victims of domestic abuse.
- \$500 was given to Haywood County Meals on Wheels.
- Roughly \$130 was used to support our summer intern's work with the Pigeon Community Multicultural Development Center.
- Roughly \$175 was used to defray expenses related to Grace Church's monthly Pathways dinners.
- \$300 has been earmarked for racial reconciliation in Haywood County. It is expected that these funds will go to support Changemakers, a group which started as a partnership between Grace Church and the Pigeon Center roughly six years ago and is still in operation.

3. **Parish Fair Grants:** The Outreach Committee oversaw the grant process to distribute the roughly \$13,000 raised through the 2018 Parish Fair.
4. **Parish-wide Appeals:** The Outreach Committee has overseen parish-wide appeals (e.g., Undie Sunday, the Harvest Gathering, the Angel Tree, etc.) to ensure that they meet the three marks of ministry (meeting a demonstrated need, providing an outlet for passion/talent of the community, and using available resources). We have also tried to space these appeals out over time so that we don't encounter donor fatigue!
5. **Soul-Searching:** The Outreach Committee has been very aware of the committee structure reform that the Vestry is overseeing this year. We are closely examining how the Outreach Committee fits into the big picture as an intermediary between the Vestry and specific ministries. As our rector has stated, we are in the process of shifting ministries from being "personal" ministries toward committee/parish ministries, so that the Outreach Committee would identify the various parish appeals for the year and the associated leadership based on parish-wide missional priorities.



Statistical Data

Baptisms:

Hunter Ryan Shults
Decker Phillip Shults
Ella Marie Meadows
Ralph Andrew
Edithanne Dudley

Marriages:

Elizabeth Anne Gibert & Jacob Stephen
Haffner

Confirmations/Receptions:

Katherine Jennings
Karen Morris
Timothy Hussey
Jan Treston
James (Jim) Treston
Dale McDonald
Marcia McDonald
Ralph Andrew (confirmed at Holy Spirit,
Mars Hill)

Deaths & Burials (* indicates non-member):

Ava Miller
Rachel McKay
David Crocker
Mary Elizabeth Staiger
Spring Allen
Aubrey Williams*
Mark Brown*
Robert Breese
Phil Heinz*
Andrew Novotney*

Transfers Out or Moved to Inactive:

Julia & Frank Bonomo, Sophia, Caroline,
Lucie, & Ava
Don & Nancy Haynes
Dan & Deener Matthews
Bob Peebles

Reactivated:

Leslie Leathers
Carl Matthews & Larry Davis; Isaiah,
Alicia, and Carlos Davis

New Members:

All those baptized
Sue Shirley
Bob Peebles
Katherine Jennings
Jim & Jan Treston
Derrick & John Zeller
Scott & Lucy Dudley
Darden Yerkes
Bill Pace
Ginger & Walt Lambeth
Joe Root
Patricia Robinson
Adele Novotney
Anne DaMitz
Sandra Curtis
Madison Owen
Earle Pratt & Valerie Sanborn
Bob Stambaugh & Juan Garcia
Stephen Hattendorf
Barbara Rowe

Annual Sunday Attendance, YTD: 148

