

**GRACE
LUTHERAN
CHURCH**

**Live worship online until further notice
See page 5 for how to access**

**Sunday Worship: 9:00 a.m.
Weekday morning Prayers 9:30 a.m.**

The building is closed – reach us at 515-276-6873

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www.gracedm.org

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Turn Around

In the 17th Chapter of the Gospel According to St. Luke, we find an encounter between Jesus and a group of 10 lepers. These people were banded together as a means of survival in a world that would have nothing to do with them. They call out for mercy and instead are made clean. As these 10 lepers make their way to the priest to be declared clean, one of them turns around to give thanks. In returning, he moves from being clean to being made well, or more accurately, whole.

There are many things about which I could write for this newsletter. Each would be prudent and apply to the work that we do together as the people of God at Grace Lutheran Church. To repent is literally “to turn around” and to see things differently. Instead of focusing on the busyness of life and ministry, I am choosing to turn around and offer thanks.

Yesterday, January 24th, was a big day around Grace Lutheran Church. We not only gathered in worship for the Third Sunday after Epiphany, but we shared in our Annual Meeting through Zoom, and began preparation for a small group study during Lent: Dialogues on Race. There are so many who work so hard to make sure things go as smoothly as possible, and I wish to pause and say “Thank You.”

Many of you are aware of the extraordinary work that Chuck Denton and Amy Schmelzer have done with the livestreaming of worship services. These two have been involved for months planning out equipment needs, installing equipment, troubleshooting, and training, all while behind the scenes. In addition to Chuck and Amy, Jon Rissman has helped troubleshoot camera equipment, install cables, and runs the cameras every Sunday morning. Paul Nelson is at worship every week to run the PowerPoint. Michelle Voelker was instrumental in getting the livestream of worship onto our website and publishes the link to the recordings each week. This team of people is exceptional. Feel free to reach out and thank them too.

Rich Snyder and Emma Stammer prepare beautiful music for each worship service. While Emma is away on parental leave with the arrival of Cyrus Joe, I give extra thanks to Rich for his work providing music leadership in worship and beyond. Kathy Bowermaster, Jenny Rehder, Alex Davik, and Rich Voelker are at worship nearly every week leading the music, and the addition of 4-part vocals has greatly improved the leading of hymns through the livestream. I offer thanks for all of you and invite others to express thankfulness too.

Continued on page 4

Happy February Birthday

- 1 - Larry Cramer
Sophia Royster
- 2 - Dick Johansen
Kathlina Roat
- 3 - Joplin Hutton
Jennie Elliff
William Marberry
Jolene Wiegmann
- 5 - Todd Ringgenberg
Andrew Trentmann
- 6 - Karri Brandsfield
James Hoffman
Larry Nordeen
- 8 - Joshua Shortell
- 9 - Adam Christensen
Virginia Naney
- 10 - Nancy Robbins
Carol Rudisill
Bonnie Swanson
- 12 - Lenora Iverson
Tyler Peeler
- 13 - Jessica Christensen
Timothy Hummel
- 15 - Diane Heid
Isaac McCleary
- 16 - Heather Ashton
- 17 - Gail Peterson
- 18 - Kristen Marberry
Max Palmer
Nicole Vernon
- 19 - Ellen Mumm
- 20 - Jessica Flannery
Brianna Huisman
Max Ringgenberg
- 21 - Judy Cramer
Allison Olson-Schmidt
- 22 - Julie Stuckle
- 23 - Barry Briggs
Jenie Schmidt
- 24 - Barbara Burley
Leigh Harmon
Jonathan Rudisill
- 25 - Melissa Young
- 27 - Jerry Westercamp
- 28 - Dana Johnson

FEBRUARY



BIRTHDAYS

Happy February Anniversary

FEBRUARY



- 14 – Virginia and Jay Wangerin
- 17 – Deanna and Michael Hummel
- 19 – Linda and Jim Rundle
- 20 – Janet and Norman Trentmann
- 24 – Sally and Paul Thielking

Our prayers and sympathies are with the families of:



Mo Grotheer – father of Carla Peterman

William Honnold – father of Greg Honnold

Rosella Dingman



A Rose to celebrate the birth of Cyrus Joe, son of Rick and Emma Stammer. Welcome Cyrus!

Souper Bowl Sunday, February 7, 2021

For the past several years, led by Gail and Don Peterson and others, Grace has gathered cans of chili and soup to be donated to Hope Ministries in the weeks leading up to Super Bowl Sunday.

Since we are not meeting in person and have no place for the collection barrel, Grace Staff thought it would be amazing if we could manage to stuff the Little Free Pantry that weekend. Let's fill it with cans of soup, chili, broth, boxes of broth, and can openers!

Masks anyone?

We've heard from a few people looking for masks, and we'd like to be able to connect those who need with those who can make them. We've already heard back from one person who can make – Thank You!

If you are a mask maker with extra masks on hand, or willing to make masks for members, please email Denise@gracedm.org or Michelle@gracedm.org and we'll pass your information on when others ask.

Lenten Small Group Study [Dialogues On: Race](#)

"It's not news to anyone that we are living in a time of conflict, division, and disagreement. In politics, in religion, in education, in relationship and communities and churches we are becoming people who can't seem to find our way out of the "us vs. them" pit of divisiveness. It doesn't matter who you think is "us" and who is "them" We all feel stuck.

And yet we know it doesn't have to be like this. In the face of cracking communities and strained family dynamics, the church is uniquely equipped to bring healing, hope, and wholeness to a hurting world. Ours is a faith built on hope, on the belief that we are all created in the image of God, on the assurance that no person or situation is beyond redemption. We believe faith is not only believing in God, but also doing the work of God in the world, we are the shining city on a hill, and the world needs our light now more than ever."

In this course your small group will discuss various issues related to race. Each week, your group will spend time sharing perspectives on what you've read. You'll have time to explore your ideas as a group, and time to process your ideas with a partner. You'll work together to create an action plan that fits your context. Then you'll take all of that with you, into your jobs and homes and holiday dinners, and offer an alternative to conflict and division, you'll offer dialogues."

If you are interested in being a part of this study contact Ellen (ellen@gracedm.org).

- The deadline to sign up is Feb. 1
- The cost is \$5 for the materials. *Do not let the cost of materials keep you from committing to be a part of this important conversation, there is money available to help cover the cost of materials.*
- Groups will meet via Zoom at a time to be determined by group leaders and members once groups are assigned. Groups will have some freedom in deciding when to meet but there will likely be a Wednesday evening and Sunday late morning/early afternoon option.

If for whatever reason you are not able to participate in this small group study, here are some additional resources for you to read during Lent to increase your awareness of racial issues in our church and our world.

For kids and families - Ellen will also be reading many of these on Facebook during Lent.

"God's Dream" by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Douglas Carlton Abrams

"Say Something! The World Needs Your Voice!" by Peter H. Reynolds

"Little Humans" by Brandon Stanton

"We Are Together" by Britta Teckentrup

"Anti- Racist Baby" by Ibram X. Kendi

"All Are Welcome" by Alexandra Penfold

"Be Who You Were Meant To Be" by Mrs. Lauren Grabois Fischer

For adults and teens

"White Allies in the Struggle for Racial Justice" Boyd, Drick

"God is Red: A Native View of Religion" Deloria, Jr., Vine.

"Rescuing the Gospel from the Cowboys: A Native Expression of the Jesus Way" Twiss, Richard

"The Warmth of Other Suns" Wilkerson, Isabel

"We Should all Be Feminists" Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi

"Eloquent Rage: A Black Feminist Discovers Her Superpower" Cooper, Brittany

Turn Around, continued from page 1

Tammy Denton has done an amazing job as Council President this past year, and that really showed during the Annual Meeting. I cannot thank Tammy enough for her work on with Council and beyond. Kevin Krause, as always, did a great job summarizing our financial situation and guiding us through the budget process. In addition to Tammy and Kevin, we had a team of people making sure the Annual Meeting ran smoothly, including Chuck Denton, Amy Schmelzer, and Alex Davik as moderators, Rich Snyder as Parliamentarian, and Ellen Rothweiler on the Screen Shares. Your preparation for the Annual Meeting showed and the meeting went very smoothly. Thank you. Feel free to reach out and thank them too.

It was humbling to join the small group meeting in preparation for the Dialogues on Race study during Lent. There were a dozen people in that meeting, actively working to process and troubleshoot in preparation for this study. Ellen is doing a great job of leading this group. The content of the study is beautifully written and is written in a way to draw anyone into the conversation. It is humbling to watch this come together, and to witness the care and acceptance that is on display with these leaders. Thank you all for your continued passion and leadership on topics of acceptance, including race.

Last, but certainly not least, I want to thank all of you, for your continued patience in this time of pandemic. At a conference gathering recently, I remarked that the people of God at Grace Lutheran Church have been “incredibly patient and gracious with my shortcomings.” I look around and see such beauty in all of you, and strength of this community of faith. You all continue to dazzle me with your grace, patience, passion, and strength. Thank you for the privilege of serving as pastor. It is truly an honor.

In Christ,
Pastor Mike



Ash Wednesday

You may be wondering how Ash Wednesday will work in a world of physical distancing. It will look different, but we will still observe Ash Wednesday.

The livestream of worship will take place at 6:30 p.m. on our website and Facebook.

We offer the following options for the Imposition of Ashes:

In the Grace Lutheran Church parking lot

We will offer “Drive Thru” Imposition of Ashes from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 4:00-5:30 p.m. The following safety measures will be in place:

- Drive up past the main entrance and Pastor Mike will meet you at your vehicle.
- Wear a mask.
- Pastor Mike will wear a mask and gloves, and will use Q-tips for the Imposition of Ashes

In your home

We will prepare containers with ashes for people to participate in the Imposition of Ashes in your home. Contact Pastor Mike (mike@gracedm.org or 515-276-6873) if you would like to pick up ashes or would need them delivered to you.

- Please save the delivery option for those who are unable to get to Grace to pick up the ashes.
- You will need to mix the ashes prior to worship. Do so by adding a few **drops of oil**.
- **NOTE: DO NOT USE WATER. THIS WILL CREATE LYE** and will burn your skin.

Grace will continue with Holden Evening Prayer during the Wednesdays of Lent.

Those who receive the worship mailing will automatically be mailed a copy of the Holden Prayer Booklet, and the weekly Lenten Sermons.

For everyone worshiping along with the Live Broadcast, we would like to offer you a copy of the Holden Evening Worship booklet to use at home. Please email michelle@gracedm.org or call the office if you would like a copy. Please mention if you will be picking up Ashes for use at home, and if picking up the Lenten Study Materials. We will bundle everything together so you only need to make one trip.

Accessing Online Worship

We will continue to adapt worship to best be a place where we become centered in our faith.

Written materials and Announcements can be found in the Resources section of the website. Click on the word Resources at the top right of any page of the website and go from there! Or, follow this link <https://gracedm.org/resources/> For those who are not using social media, computers, or smart phones, please call the office and we will happily mail you a copy of the worship materials to use at home.

Worship will be broadcast live at 9:00 a.m. through Facebook and our website.

Worship will broadcast live on Sunday at 9:00 a.m. on Facebook Live and on the permanent Live Player on our website. The logo and a message letting you know you are in the right place will be visible (without sound) for a few minutes before 9:00 a.m. This will allow us time to troubleshoot any technical difficulties that may arise.

In the "Welcome to Grace" section on the www.gracedm.org homepage, you will now see a red button "Online Worship". Click on that button to be taken to our permanent Live Player page.



This service will not appear as a scheduled live feed on Facebook. The service will appear as live shortly before 9:00 a.m. as the stream begins. There may be a couple of minutes where you see the logo without sound. If you see that, know that you are in the right place and the service will begin shortly. Thank you for your patience.

Weekday Morning Prayer on Facebook Pastor Mike will go live weekday mornings at 9:30 a.m.

If you are not on Facebook, you can still access the videos at this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Religious-Organization/626637384050683/>

Sunday Morning Zoom Virtual Coffee Hour begins at 10:15 a.m. on Sunday mornings in January. Dates, topics, and Links can be found on page 3, and in the Thursday afternoon enews.

Watch or rewatch Worship at any time.

We'll post a link to the most recent worship service within 24 hours – and often faster than that.

Simply go to the Resources Page on our website <https://gracedm.org/resources/>

Look for the bubble labeled "Recent Worship Videos" – click on that bubble.

You will be presented with a list of recent service dates - click the date of worship you wish to watch, and it will load for you.

If you are already on the Online Worship Live Stream page, you will see a link that will take you directly to the archive.

Meet our new Council Members

Aaron Brandsfield, Tom McCleary, Dean Watson, and Linda Moravec



Aaron Brandsfield grew up in Carlisle, Iowa where he graduated in 1992. He attended Grand View College and earned a BS in Accounting. Immediately following graduation, he worked with his father as an accountant/tax preparer for 10 years. Aaron then purchased the accounting and tax preparation business from his father in January 2006. He took over the financial services practice from his father 3 ½ years ago. Aaron has been licensed as a financial professional for about 19 years now.

Aaron currently lives in Granger, Iowa with his wife Karri of 21 years and their two daughters, Courtney (20 and a junior at Grand View) and Kiley (16 a sophomore at WG High School). In his free time Aaron enjoys golfing, camping, target shooting and spending time with family and friends.



Tom McCleary

I have been a member at Grace for 25 plus years. I have served on Church Council and various other committees and projects. Currently, I am a member of the Adult Faith Enrichment Team which coordinates the Adult Education hour, usher and count Sunday offering. I am employed as a Data Warehouse Analyst with the state of Iowa. My wife Mary Jo and I were married at Grace. We have two children, son Isaac and daughter Lydia, both are students at Iowa State.



Linda Moravec

Linda has been attending Grace for more than ten years and a member since 2012. Linda has been a Sunday School and Vacation Bible School volunteer for many years – at Grace and at previous congregations. Here at Grace she also sings in the choir and is a member of Lydia/Martha Circle. For hobbies, Linda enjoys fishing and camping, especially with her grandson. And she enjoys billiards!



Dean Watson

Member of Grace church for 4 years
Retired from Hy-Vee Inc. after 34 years
Have served on council for 2 years
Have been on property committee and overseeing our insurance
Married to Cathy



Meet our New Endowment Committee member:

Gary Nehmer

My wife Marion and I have been members of Grace for well over 25 years. In that time, I have served on a number of committees and have had multiple terms on the Congregation Council. If selected I will look forward to becoming more familiar with how the Endowment Committee operates. I look forward to better days in 2021 once we beat this pandemic!

Lutheran World Relief Drive in Lent

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought more than a disease to our most vulnerable neighbors around the world. In some communities it has meant hunger, and being cut off from food, seeds and critical farming supplies. LWR has adapted its existing projects so implementation can continue safely in the COVID era, ensuring the pandemic's economic impacts on families are mitigated and basic needs are met. Through projects with local partners and community networks, LWR is providing personal protective equipment, potable water installations and hygiene kits as well as distributing emergency food, food vouchers and cash transfers to the most vulnerable.

During Lent, we will support the work of Lutheran World Relief by collecting donations to send directly to LWR for the areas of greatest need. We have set a goal to raise at least \$500. Donations can be sent to the church office or can be made online on our church website. Please put LWR on the comment line. Thank you for your generosity! Your LWR team at Grace hopes to bring you a kitmaking event later in the year when it becomes safe to gather.

Thank You!

Many thanks to the Lydia-Martha Circle and Member Care Team for sending me cards and notes throughout the year. A special thank you goes to Kyra Lenhart, who is in the Confirmation Class, for the delightful Christmas gift bag that was delivered to me. I appreciate all your thoughtfulness. I am blessed to be a part of the Grace Church Family.

Gloria Moon

I want to thank you for the bag of Christmas gifts. I enjoyed them so much but most of all I appreciate the love and care they represent. I miss you so much, I hope we can worship together soon.

Delores Larsen

Thank you so much for the beautiful holiday bag full of useful things bought to me from church by Layne Webber. She wrote such a nice message!

Virginia Naney

I so appreciate the cards from Circle and Church Staff!

Karen Crooks
(as shared by Martha Mitchell)

Dear Grace Friends,

All of us have missed so much for so many months the gathering for worship services. The next best favor for me has been receiving the service complete with the message, hymns, communion in postal mailings every week. I have so much appreciation for all of the effort that has provided those mailings!

Also, I thank very much the Lydia-Martha Circle for the very attractive Pop-up Nativity scene. Next to my Advent candles, it is a very nice center-piece for the "Twelve days of Christmas".

The Member Care Group delivered a very nice gift containing several miscellaneous items that are all very much appreciated!

Sincerely, Richard E. (Dick) Johansen



From all of us at DMARC, Thank you!

Your support helps us provide healthy food to over 57,000 people in our community facing food insecurity.

- Between 1/1/2020 – 9/30/2020 Grace contributed \$3,443.00 and 456.5 pounds of produce.
- Additional unweighed produce was taken to several food pantries in the Metro area during the growing season.



Happy Valentine's Day from LSI!

"We love because he first loved us." 1 John 4:19

Lutheran Services in Iowa's (LSI) mission is about love: responding to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. We give thanks for all the ministry partners, both individuals and congregations, who help share this love for Iowa children, adults, and families!

We see this love in newly adopted children and their families, in teens who are overcoming years of trauma and building bright futures, in Iowans with disabilities who are growing their independence and confidence, in new parents who are raising strong and healthy families, and in so many other moments of joy. You can help carry out our mission of hope and healing by giving a gift and showing love to the Iowa families we serve. For more information, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI's Director of Philanthropy and Church Relations, at Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org or 563-676-2065.

Thank you for the love you share and create through LSI. Happy Valentine's Day!

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at LSIowa.org and facebook.com/LSI.iowa.

Building a Bond

Julie had made a promise years ago: If anything happened to her friend, Julie would take care of her son, Jacob.

When Jacob's mom passed away and he had no place to go, Julie stepped up. Her six children had grown up and moved out of her home, and she had the resources and space needed to care for Jacob. She became a mentor through LSI's Host Homes program. The service enables Iowans with disabilities to move into a private family home and live with a specially-selected mentor instead of living in a shared space with roommates and several staff members.

Jacob moved into Julie's home last December and now, the two are thriving. Jacob is learning to take care of himself and build the life skills he needs to feel more confident and independent. He is learning to cook and enjoys looking up new recipes to try, especially meatloaf.

"It's a great opportunity. You're changing their lives," Julie says. "You get to know each other more personally. We have a lot of discussions and heart-to-hearts."

Jacob is finishing his senior year of high school. He enjoys learning new things and visiting new places, and he dreams of the day when he and Julie can go on more trips. Once it is safe to do so, Jacob is determined to visit more zoos and take a trip to Canada.

"It's good," Jacob says of his Host Homes match with Julie. "She makes me laugh."

DMARC Requested Donations: Cash

DMARC is able to purchase more per dollar in bulk than we can in person, and is both easier and safer for many at this time. Checks may be mailed to the address below, and food donations may be dropped off at the DMARC Food Pantry Network Warehouse, located at 1435 Mulberry Street in downtown Des Moines.

Monday – Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Friday 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

<https://www.dmarcunited.org/donate/food/>

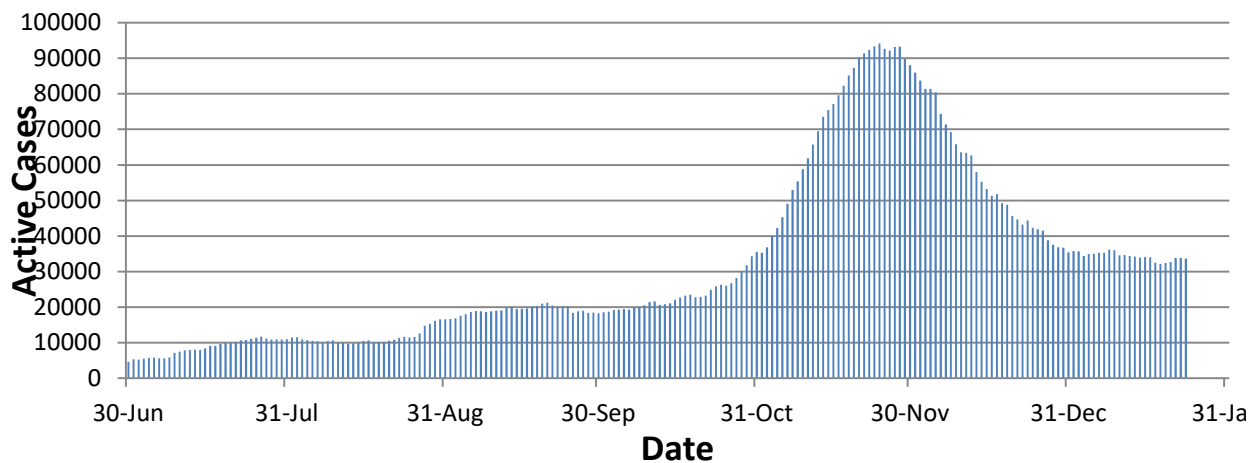
Current trends in COVID-19 infections in Iowa and Polk County.

Summary: Tracking the number of cases in various classes as reported daily by the Iowa Department of Public Health indicates that while the rate of increase in the number of cases in the state has fallen since the middle of December 2020, the numbers of active cases, new cases, and hospitalized patients exceed those in the months of April through August. The major conclusion then is that the number of Iowans infected by the virus continues to grow, and the citizens of Iowa are not approaching a situation where the virus will be contained.

Details:

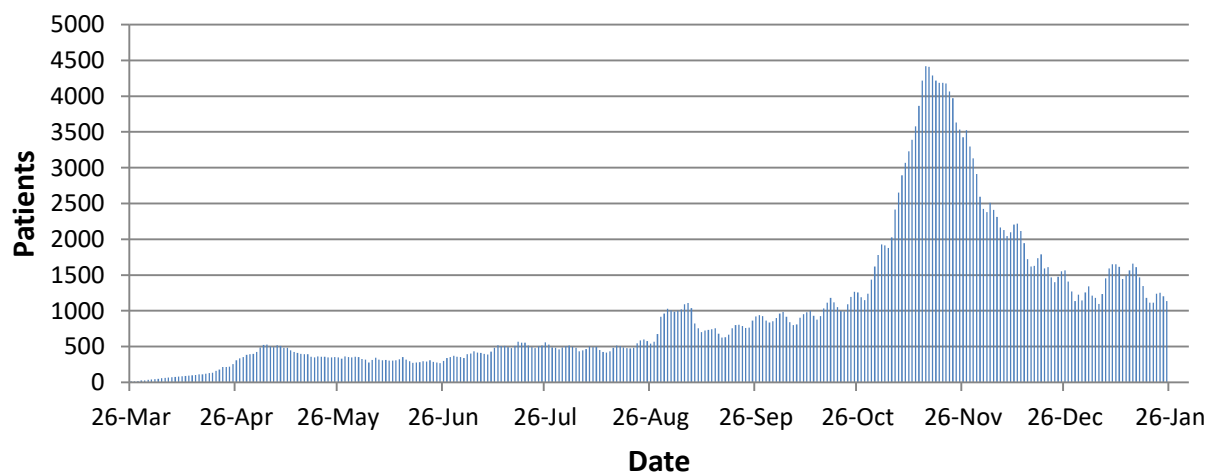
Active cases: The plot of the number of active but not hospitalized virus cases since the end of June shows approximately 1,000 cases in July and August, a doubling of that number in September and October, and then a peak of nine times the summer cases in November. While cases have decreased since then, currently the number of active cases is still three times what it was over the summer. There has been little decrease in January 2021.

Active Not Hospitalized Cases State Wide



New Cases: The plot of ten-day averages of new cases state wide shows about 500 new cases per day during the span of April through August. Following the first of September, new cases roughly doubled in the next two months, and then in early November they rose to a peak nine times the levels in the spring and summer. The number of new cases has fallen since then, but they currently are roughly double the cases over the summer.

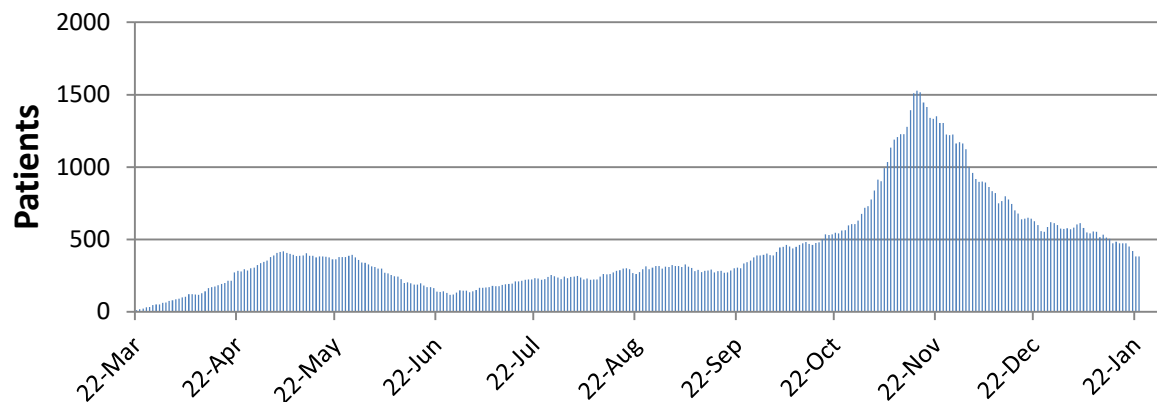
10 Day Average State Wide



Not hospitalized plus discharged cases: One measure that indicates some optimism in the measures of virus activity is the number of non-hospitalized cases plus discharged cases. This measure includes all cases diagnosed as positive for the virus minus the ones currently hospitalized and the ones who died due to the virus. Similar to the previous charts, the day to day change in the number of these cases was fairly consistent through the summer, showed a drastic increase through the fall, peaked in November, and has now returned to a value similar to the values over the summer. If this trend continues, the number of new cases will eventually become small enough to indicate no active spreading of the virus.

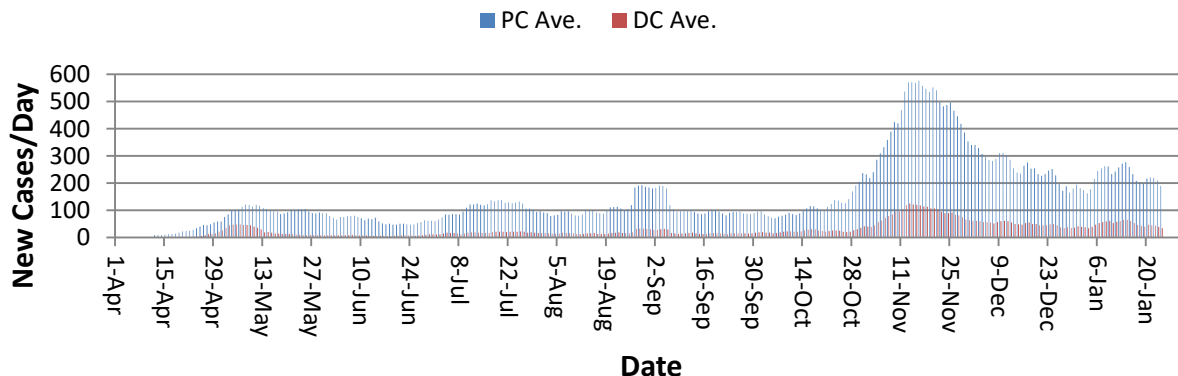
Hospitalized cases: The number of hospitalized patients reached a maximum in May of about 400, fell below that number during June, July, and August, and then rose to three times that number in November. Currently, the number of hospitalized patients has dropped to 400 again.

In Hospital State Wide



Polk and Dallas County cases: The number of new cases in Polk (blue) and Dallas (red) counties qualitatively runs parallel with the graphs above. The running ten day average number of new cases in Polk County was approximately 100 from April through October, but then it rose five times that number in November. Currently, the number of new cases has fallen and is about double what it was during the summer months. However, it has ceased to decrease over the past month.

Ten Day Average of New Cases Polk and Dallas Counties



Conclusions: The only encouraging conclusion from these data is that the rate of the increase in new cases of COVID infection is decreasing and is similar to what it was during the early phases of the pandemic in April and May. All the other data indicate that the numbers of new and current cases are higher than what was seen in the first six months of the pandemic. Obviously, the steps that have been taken (or ignored) have done nothing to slow the spread of the virus. To reach any other conclusion is to ignore the data summarizing those people who have become infected.

At the January 19th, 2021 Church Council Meeting:

The Council met utilizing the Zoom teleconferencing application.

The Council was informed that the financial and staff reports are unchanged from the printings in the 2020 Annual Report.

Property Committee Reported that it will be seeking estimates for repairing/replacing windows on the third floor as well as the Upper Room.

Health and Safety Update: The slower than anticipated rollout of getting corona virus vaccines to the public, combined with high numbers for positive tests and hospitalizations still make a return to in-person worship doubtful until late spring or early summer. The Committee keeps a close eye on the numbers and will notify the Council of any changes.

The Council received an update from the Nominating Committee. A slate of candidates is being finalized and will be in place prior to the Annual Meeting.

Annual Meeting: The Council reviewed and fine-tuned procedures to be utilized during the Annual Meeting.

Next scheduled Council meeting will be January 24th, 2021, via zoom, immediately following the 2020 Annual Meeting for the purpose of seating new Council members and election of officers.

**Respectfully submitted,
David F. Gronert
Council Secretary**

Finance Report – 2020

To see the entire 2020 Financial Report, please refer to the last five pages of the Annual Report that was mailed to your household.

If you require a copy, please call the office at 515-276-6873 and we can send one to you. You can find the Annual Report on our website, in the Reports section, which is nestled in the Resources section of the website, here: <https://gracedm.org/resources/reports/> The Financial pages are intentionally left off of the online copy.



Thank you to our Financial Team for all of your work!

Anti-Racism Corner This will be a place for Facts about racial disparities, and definitions of terms. We invite you to use this as a starting point to examine your own biases, knowledge, research, and discussion

Ally

1. Someone who makes the commitment and effort to recognize their privilege (based on gender, class, race, sexual identity, etc.) and work in solidarity with oppressed groups in the struggle for justice. Allies understand that it is in their own interest to end all forms of oppression, even those from which they may benefit in concrete ways.
2. Allies commit to reducing their own complicity or collusion in oppression of those groups and invest in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression.

SOURCE: <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>

We aim to become allies, but recognize that unless we are part of an oppressed segment of the population, we can never really understand their experiences and history. We recognize that there will always be more to learn, unlearn, and do. We recognize that only those who are oppressed can recognize us as an ally. Recognition as an ally is not the goal, rather recognition of how we can become a better ally is.



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