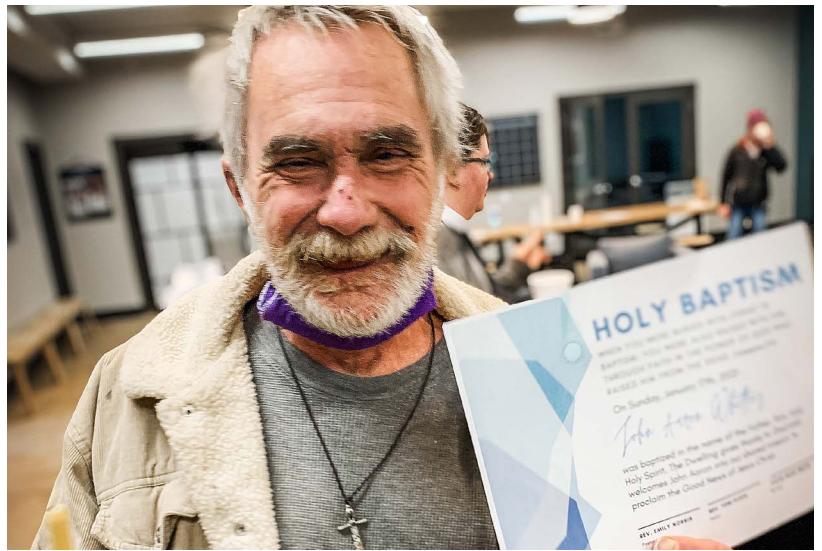


ANNUAL REPORT

2021



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



A MESSAGE FROM ELCA PRESIDING BISHOP

*Elizabeth
Eaton*

Dear friends in Christ,

The last year has been one of adapting and learning. In many places we have seen vibrant and vital ministry spring forth from changes made due to the pandemic. Digital worship opportunities have introduced to our congregations people who may never have walked into one of our buildings. Many congregations have found new ways to invite people to share their generosity through online giving. And many ministries have found just how vital they are as they continue to serve alongside people in their communities.

The first chapter of James, verse 17, reminds us that “Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” Yes, this has been a season of change, but Scripture also reminds us that we serve a generous, steadfast God.

While we stay rooted in God’s enduring, unchanging promise, God also gives us the gifts of creativity and learning. Across all three expressions of the church we have used those gifts to serve God, love our neighbor and share the good news of Jesus Christ. In this time of change, we have opened our arms wider to meet people where they are, living into the reality that we are not defined or confined by the four walls of our buildings.

Through all this, I am so grateful for your generous sharing of creativity, time, talents and resources. All good gifts do come from God, and we are called to share and use those gifts. We have and will continue to answer that call. There is still much change and learning to come, but God’s steadfast love energizes us for the work God is still doing in the world through this church.

Elizabeth A. Eaton

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

“Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

OPENING LITURGY

Litany

Today our congregation gathers in prayer and hope to begin another year of ministry. We bring with us the memory of a year like no other, even as we move into a future that we cannot yet imagine. Yet even now, as in every age, God is our refuge and strength. In times of plenty and want, in times of conflict and peace, in times of growing and pruning, we remember:

God has called us for such a time as this.

We remember the past year with lament and gratitude. We have lost so much, and so much still feels uncertain. We have also witnessed God's hand at work in new and unexpected ways. We delight at hidden seeds bearing surprising and wonderful fruit. When our own resources fail, when we cannot predict the future, when we must rely on God alone, we remember:

God has called us for such a time as this.

We celebrate this moment and the many ways God has held us together as a community. We give thanks for the gift of our church building and the welcome it provides, even as we bless God for the marvel of technology and the new bonds of connection it makes possible. When our bodies need sanctuary, when our minds need expanding, when your grace must transcend our limitations, we remember:

God has called us for such a time as this.

We look ahead to the road we will travel together this year. We anticipate and receive with joy the new gifts God's love has planned. We pray for the grace to let go of what has served its holy purpose. When we are trailblazers or followers, when we are seekers or visionaries, when we must walk by faith and not by sight, we remember:

God has called us for such a time as this.

And so we pray: Grace our meeting, O God, with the gift of your Holy Spirit: the Spirit who has guided the church from the beginning, the Spirit of our risen Lord Jesus, the Spirit who sends us as healers and restorers of your beloved world. You are the source of our life together. You are the rock and cornerstone.

You have called us for such a time as this.

God of the Fertile Fields

1 God of the fer - tile fields, sha - per of
 2 We would be stew - ards true, hold - ing in
 3 As grows the hid - den seed to fruit that
 4 God of the coun - try - side, dear to the

earth that yields our dai - ly bread: forth from your
 trust from you all that you give; help us in
 serves our need, so your reign grows. Let all our
 Christ who died to make us one: we pledge our

boun - teous hand come gifts your love has planned,
 love to share, teach us like you to care
 toil be used, no gift of yours a - bused,
 lives a - new in faith - ful love to you.

that all in ev - 'ry land be clothed and fed.
 for peo - ple ev - 'ry - where, that all may live.
 no hum - ble task re - fused your love be - stows.
 Guide all we say and do. Your will be done.

All Creation Sings #1063

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**O God,
 you have called your servants
 to ventures of which we cannot see the ending,
 by paths as yet untrodden,
 through perils unknown.
 Give us faith to go out with good courage,
 not knowing where we go,
 but only that your hand is leading us
 and your love supporting us;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord.
 Amen. (ELW, p. 317)**



Agenda

Call to Order

Devotions

Adoption of Agenda

Statistical Information.....Pages 2-3

Minutes from 2020 Annual Meeting.....Pages 4

Council President's Report.....Page 5

Pastor's Report.....Page 6

Staff Reports.....Pages 7-9

Committee Reports.....Pages 10-22

Election of voting members for 2022 Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly
Saturday, May 20-21, 2022 in Coralville.

Election of Council Members & Endowment Committee Members

Balance Sheets and Income Statements

Budget Adoption

Adjournment

Lord's Prayer

Grace Lutheran Church Congregational Council

Term Expires <u>February 2022</u> Susanne Carney David Gronert Sally Preston John Roehrick	Term Expires <u>February 2023</u> Bruce Bergman Nancy Crowfoot Valerie Culp Alex Davik	Term Expires <u>February 2024</u> Aaron Brandsfield Tom McCleary Linda Moravec Dean Watson
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2021 Executive Committee

Bruce Bergman
Alex Davik
David Gronert
John Roehrick

Congregational Officers

President	John Roehrick
Vice President	Alex Davik
Secretary	David Gronert
Treasurer	Tom Selander
Financial Secretary	Paul Kallenbach

**Grace Lutheran Church Staff
The Rev. Michael Jon Schmidt**

Grace Staff Members

Jessica Flannery, Office Assistant for Worship
Denise Friesth, Minister for Administration
Todd Haugen, Custodian
Rich Snyder, Organist
Emma Stammer, Minister for Worship and Music
Michelle Voelker, Minister for Communication

In Memorandum

We remember with love and respect the following loved ones who from their labors rest.

(Names and date of death.)

Morris (Mo) Grotheer	01-02-2021
Rosella Dingman	01-23-2021
Marvin Johns	07-11-2021
Anna Marie Peterson	09-09-2021
Vivian Swanson	09-30-2021
John Gronert	10-14-2021
LaRue Buihner	10-24-2021
Cathleen Swanson	12-30-2021

Membership Statistics

	<u>Baptized</u>	<u>Confirmed</u>
Membership end of 2019	692	580
as reported in the Congregational Report to the ELCA		
Members removed during 2021		
by death	8	8
by transfer to other congregations or other reasons	4	3
Members received during 2021		
by baptism	2	
by transfer from other congregations by affirmation of faith		
baptized youth confirmed in 2021		5
Membership end of 2021	682	574

Statistical Report

Worship Services Conducted.....	67
Weddings held at Grace.....	0
Baptisms	8
Funerals.....	5
Average Sunday worship attendance 2004...	368
Average Sunday worship attendance 2005...	333
Average Sunday worship attendance 2006...	324
Average Sunday worship attendance 2007...	294
Average Sunday worship attendance 2008...	293
Average Sunday worship attendance 2009...	259
Average Sunday worship attendance 2010....	228
Average Sunday worship attendance 2011....	229
Average Sunday worship attendance 2012.....	212
Average Sunday worship attendance 2013.....	197
Average Sunday worship attendance 2014.....	197
Average Sunday worship attendance 2015.....	191
Average Sunday worship attendance 2016.....	178
Average Sunday worship attendance 2017.....	167
Average Sunday worship attendance 2018.....	141
Average Sunday worship attendance 2019.....	133
Average Sunday worship attendance 2020....	worship moved to online in March
Average Sunday worship (online/in person)	

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Jan	355	341	291	305	250	256	245	215	181	194	185	153	159	142	125	133	
Feb	305	307	242	314	281	252	212	216	231	199	197	183	172	133	100	132	
Mar	402	299	315	389	280	263	259	230	264	188	205	255	157	133	140		
Apr	326	399	379	324	342	300	347	289	224	268	270	191	237	192	212		
May	334	336	306	270	250	236	216	219	190	190	166	185	157	148	140		
Jun	295	312	299	251	218	187	195	198	156	167	166	150	153	125	116		
July	296	277	272	242	192	169	199	174	159	164	149	141	128	112	110		
Aug	297	277	252	260	245	155	196	188	165	170	162	153	130	126	127		
Sept	333	292	298	263	245	219	206	181	165	196	187	178	151	134	121		
Oct	398	341	299	321	266	247	225	215	209	213	203	175	165	134	128		
Nov	326	309	307	302	291	235	237	211	241	206	205	184	168	135	135		
Dec	319	394	265	269	238	206	210	208	176	198	197	202	229	165	138		

**Grace Lutheran Church
Annual Congregational Meeting
January 24, 2021**

Held via Zoom Teleconferencing Application

After a quorum was established, the meeting was called to order by Congregation President Tammy Denton at 10:17 AM. Some brief guidance was given concerning how to participate in a remote meeting.

Devotions:

Pastor Mike Schmidt led the assembly in devotions with a reading from the 3rd chapter of John. We are born of the spirit. When God sent serpents to punish the Children of Israel wandering in the wilderness, He had Moses make a bronze serpent to set on a pole. Anyone who was repentant, even though that person had been bitten by a serpent, would live. God didn't take away the pain of the venom but provided a way to work through it. In the same manner, He has provided us with Christ to help us find a way through the pain and anguish we experience, especially during these trying times of pandemic and other hardships.

Rich Snyder was appointed Parliamentarian.

- It was moved, seconded, and passed to adopt the agenda with the addition of an informal poll to be taken just prior to adjournment.
- It was moved, seconded and passed to adopt the minutes from the 2020 Annual Congregational Meeting as written.

Reports:

- President Denton directed the assembly to review the statistical information on page three of the Annual Report, then asked for questions or comments. There were none.
- The participants were directed to review the Congregational Council President's report and the Pastor's report. There were no questions and the reports were approved as written by unanimous consent.
- The participants were directed to review the Staff reports. There were no questions and the reports were approved as written by unanimous consent.
- The participants were directed to review the various committee reports. There were no questions and the reports were approved as written by unanimous consent.

Elections

- President Denton opened nominations from the floor to elect voting members to the 2021 Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly. Carol Woodruff and Jessye Flannery were nominated and elected by motion of acclamation.
- Gary Nehmer was elected by motion of acclamation to serve as a member of the Endowment Committee.
- Aaron Brandsfield, Dean Watson, Tom McCleary, and Linda Moravec were elected by motion of acclamation to serve on the Church Council.

Budget

Kevin Krause presented the Financial Report & the 2021 Grace Lutheran Church and Grace Kids Care budgets. He noted that with the pandemic causing some closure of the daycare and suspension of in-person worship and meetings there were some financial difficulties. Thanks to the Cares Act, the continued pledge offerings, and the hard work of our staff, Daycare Director, Finance Committee, and President Denton we came through 2020 in reasonably good financial shape. Thanks were extended to all involved in working on financial solutions & keeping the daycare open as much as possible.

- It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the FY 2021 budget for Grace Lutheran Church.
- It was moved, seconded, and passed to approve the FY 2021 budget for Grace Kids Care.

- Special thanks to President Denton for guiding the Council through a very difficult year!

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:17 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

David F. Gronert, Congregational Council Secretary

Report from the Congregational Council President John Roehrick

This past year has been interesting to say the least, but Grace continues to be strong and committed to our mission – a community of faith, strengthened in love and centered in worship, leading to Discipleship and Community in the name of Jesus. Unfortunately, one of our outreaches into the community – Grace Kids Care -- closed after over twenty (20) years of service.

However, with the guidance of our Health and Safety Task Force, we were able to re-open the church for worship services and other events. The task force continues to work and guide the staff and council with respect to the ongoing issues of Covid and the impact on the services. Hopefully, in 2022 we will be able to expand the in-person services and continue with the on-line services, which are of benefit to many of our members.

The congregation is to be complemented for stepping forward with its financial support. Because of this, our property maintenance went forward, and we were able to meet budget. With the forgiveness of the Payroll Protection Program loans by the government we have a reserve for the future. Though the funds are a reserve they do not supplant the need for continued stewardship from the Congregation to meet the 2022 budget and our Capital Campaign which was postponed in 2020.

As we look forward to 2022, council and staff will be working to learn from the congregation its vision for the future; the goals for our mission; and its outreach into the community, recognizing that for the foreseeable future Grace will be a hybrid-congregation (in person and online).

Finally, I want to thank Pastor Mike for his leadership and ministry; Denise, Michelle, Emma, Rich, Todd and Jessye for their commitment to keeping the machine well-oiled and always moving forward.

We have much for which to be thankful and I personally wish everyone a blessed year and peace through Jesus Christ.

John Roehrick
Church Council President

Pastor's Report 2021
Pastor Michael Schmidt

*"If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing."
1 Corinthians 13:1-3*

I find myself looping back to these words from Paul's letter to the people of Corinth. There was a great deal of quarrelling about how best to be the church. Paul reminds them of the simple truth: if what you do is not centered in love, it really doesn't matter. This has been a guiding principle in our decisions these last months. We have been very intentional, making sure that our decisions are guided by love. These decisions could be seen as being driven by fear, but it is a deep love that guides us.

The last year has seen many such decisions. We were one of the last ELCA congregations to move to in person worship indoors. Even recently, we canceled the Christmas Day service and moved the services for December 26 and January 2 to a virtual format only. We made the decision to close Grace Kids Care, a ministry of Grace Lutheran Church for more than two decades. In the end, it was not fair to the children, families, or staff to stay open amid such uncertainty. These are not decisions that were taken lightly. They are decisions that are centered in love.

In many ways, it has been a difficult year. From the loss of my younger brother, the closing of Grace Kids Care and the departure of Ellen, to the lingering impact of Covid, it has been tough. I would be lying if I said that it did not take a toll on me personally and professionally. There are years like that. As Paul reminds us, "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends." There may be years like this, but love remains, and bears all things.

I have felt an incredible outpouring of love this year. Between the death of my brother, Jason, and my dealing with Covid, I have received such love and support from you all. Thank you! It has been such a blessing to serve here for the last ten years, and I look forward to many more together.

I am filled with hope and love as we look to the future of God's ministry at Grace Lutheran Church. The Congregational Council has made the decision to apply to become an internship site. We were close to having the budget to call as Associate Pastor. With the unknown costs of insurance, it was decided to pursue becoming a teaching site for seminary students. I believe this is a great fit for Grace Lutheran Church and gives us the opportunity to shape leaders within the ELCA. Grace Lutheran Church is a special place, and we will be able to teach others what a community of faith can be.

We do not know exactly what the future holds, but we do know that it is held in love. May that be our guide as we navigate these waters of mission and ministry together.

In Christ,
Pastor Mike

Report from the Director of Communications Michelle Voelker

All of the communication adjustments we put in place during 2020 continued to serve us well in 2021.

Staffing changes and the empty building were and continue to be an adjustment. The building is too quiet without the daycare staff and children, and the office is quieter as staff continue to rotate through the office as needed and with the absence of Ellen. However, we have become even more comfortable and adept at collaborating, brainstorming, supporting, and socializing over the past 6 months whether in person, zooming from separate offices while in the building together, or all working remotely. I am looking forward to bringing a new staff member/intern into the mix, and the possibility of the building being in use more frequently.

- **The Tuesday enews** continues to be sent weekly, and we've had a few more contributors this past year.
- **The Street sign** helps to let people know we are still open for Worship. We do get calls occasionally about things we post there, whether the Little Free Pantry, Christmas Eve worship, or other events – rare as those may be these past 2 years.
- **The website news and calendar** continue to be updated frequently, and are the most up-to-date source of information for any last minute changes.
- **Facebook** continues to be a good source of sharing information and interaction with neighborhood entities, and a well viewed domain of Pastor Mike's with Morning Prayer and Worship viewership. The Private Facebook Page – Abiding Grace – is not the active community we had envisioned, but given everyone's exhaustion with all things "online" it has settled into a nice space for occasional sharing and community.
- **Mass mailings** (and the time involved) tapered off drastically, though we do continue to mail some items to all or sections of membership as appropriate.
- **Worship Materials** continue to be mailed weekly to those who request, and are well received. We stopped emailing the materials mid-year, as the bulletins are available online or by mail, and as a measure of creating less clutter in members inboxes. However, worship is now recorded and reliably available on our website (live on Sunday and archived in Resources) as well as continuously available on our Facebook page. In addition we are excited to have returned to our pre-pandemic Bulletin style for in-person worship, mailings, and website resources. It's the little things that bring us joy!
- **Newsletter** The Friendly Visitor remains much the same, with 13 issues per year. We continue to receive contributions from the membership and community, more than making up for the lack of calendar items. We have added "Love Your Neighbor" column, which highlights diversity, inclusion, and other topics for growth.
- **Advertising** We continue to adjust targeted advertising in print and media as needed, mostly saving budget on these items in 2021 to avoid advertising something that would change a week or two later. This proved to be a good strategy, but we are looking forward to a time when we can again advertise more confidently to a wider market.

Thank you for allowing me to continue to serve the Grace Community. I have felt your much needed support this past year and it has been much appreciated.

Michelle Voelker, Minister for Communications

Report from the Minister for Administration Denise Friesth

Thank you for your continued support during 2021 and into the new year. I appreciate the opportunity to work with the people of Grace Lutheran Church as we continue to try to live as God's faithful people and discern what God is calling us to do.

My day-to-day tasks include lots of details: accounts payable, payroll, various member requests, helping to coordinate service calls with a number of vendors, etc. I enjoy these roles, but I also enjoy making time to stay connected to the members of this congregation: phone calls, cards, emails, etc.

Some of the highlights of 2021 for me include witnessing the ministries of Grace Lutheran Church reach the people of our congregation, our community and our world.

- Members – your faithful stewardship of all that God has given
- Staff – finding ways to build connections with each other and with the congregation
- Church Council – book study and meeting with staff to discern our mission
- Finance Team – support throughout the year, particularly with the transition and task of closing Grace Kids Care
- Worship volunteers – especially our tech crew, altar guild and the music team
- Education volunteers – to continue to find ways to reach and teach
- Member Care – finding so many ways to care for others even during a pandemic
- Little Free Pantry – helping meet the need to give and the need for food/toiletries
- Grace Garden – so much produce!! They make it look easy, but lots of hours are put in to have that much produce harvested from the limited square footage of land.
- Property Team volunteers – keeping our facility at a comfortable temperature and so much more
- Willing Workers – helpful Thursday morning crew to help with property needs that arise during the week
- Saturday Men's Group – more help with the maintenance of the facility, including Todd's house
- Lutheran World Relief – helping us serve those in need around the world
- Vendors – so many vendors that we have built relationships with over the years
- Thrivent Action Team Grants – assisted with one to benefit the Little Free Pantry and the other to help provide extra winter apparel for students at Moore Elementary

Thank you, all.

May God bless you abundantly in 2022.

Denise Friesth
Minister of Administration

Report from the Worship & Music Ministry

Emma Stammer

2021 has brought some normalcy back to the worship and music ministry. Worship is now in-person, the building is more open to activities, and we were able to incorporate more special music into worship services. The pandemic year necessitated adapting to remote worship, which has actually been a positive change and won't be reversed post-2020. Closing Grace Kids Care, while a gut-wrenching decision, necessitated some cleaning and clearing of the physical spaces and enabled us to see more clearly the opportunities for different ministries that require building space. Worshipping in-person was once an ordinary aspect of church life, but 2020 made us realize that being together and seeing our friends face to face is one of the most life-giving aspects that we won't soon take for granted.

None of those pandemic-year adaptations are going away, but there are still some aspects of worship life that haven't gone back to normal. The warmer months earlier this year were such a blessing in that Grace Chancel Choir felt safe coming together to sing! Even though we didn't quite feel safe enough to sing in-person during worship, it was wonderful to meet up and sing after a more than a year of silence. Luckily we now have the A/V crew to help us participate in worship virtually, and Grace Bells has played in worship more now that we've figured out how to minimize risk in the sanctuary.

My activities in 2021 included:

- Meeting with the Health and Safety Task Force to help navigate in-person worship during and post-pandemic.
- Being a part of the staff planning for the church-wide cleanup.
- Planning and playing for worship.
- Organizing musician volunteers for Sunday worship, hosting bell rehearsals, and briefly rehearsing and recording with the choir.
- Helping with K-5 Sunday School.
- Collaborating with staff and Church Council regarding mission statement development.

Bringing joy through music is always possible, and I hope to see the music ministry operating normally in the near future.

I am so very grateful for and appreciative of the Sunday morning worship volunteers who share their time and expertise each week. Thank you!

Respectfully submitted by

Emma Stammer, *minister for worship and music*

Education Report

It has been a difficult year in the life of the global Church, and Grace Lutheran Church is no different. The last 22 months have proven difficult for education, in school, home, and congregation. As I reflect on the last year, I am reminded of these words from Ecclesiastes:

"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance..." Ecclesiastes 3:1-4

We hear these words most often during funeral services. They came to mind for that very reason. At first glance, it can feel like education is dwindling away under the pressures of a lingering pandemic. Those realities, partnered with the loss of Grace Kids Care and Ellen accepting a position at a different congregation, heighten that feeling of grief and loss. Instead of dwelling there, I invite you to also reflect on the words that follow the oft quoted excerpt:

"What do workers gain from their toil? I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. "He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet^[a] no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God." Ecclesiastes 3:9-13

We are finding happiness, and doing the good that we can, while we endure this pandemic together.

Some of these highlights include a journey through the "Dialogues on Race" materials from Augsburg Fortress. We had a total of 30 participants with 10 leaders in the Spring, and nearly as many again in the Fall of 2021 during the Education Hour following Worship. Sunday School returned in October of 2021. They have met the first three Sundays of each month during the Education Hour and have coordinated Mission Opportunities for the congregation. The class size may be down, but the happiness and good that is done is making an impact. The work of Confirmation continues through mentorship and classroom study. There was also an All Church VBS this last May under the theme of "Sowing God's Love."

2021 may not have been the year that we hoped for, but I do believe it has been the year that we needed. It has offered a time of reflection, and an opportunity to return to the basics of faith and education. We have continued to find ways to be church and to embrace the work of faith formation and education. I am grateful for the work of Ellen Rothweiler and her faithfulness to the people of God at Grace Lutheran Church. I am also extremely grateful for the work of the volunteers who have stepped up with all the education endeavors this past year. You are all amazing. Thank you.

In Christ,
Pastor Mike, on behalf of all involved with Education at Grace Lutheran Church

Report from the Social Ministry Committee

In 2021, the Social Ministry Committee sponsored the Christmas Star Tree for Lutheran Services in Iowa and Mosaic.

Christmas Star Tree for Mosaic and Lutheran Services in Iowa

This year with Sunday services again being held in the sanctuary, Grace members were able to choose a star from the Star Tree in the Gathering Hall or participate online. Members had the opportunity to purchase \$25.00 Walmart gift cards for LSI's Early Childhood Development program or specific gift items for Mosaic. Thirty-four Walmart gift cards were received as well as twenty-four gifts for residents of Mosaic.

Thank You

- to Joie Gronert for organizing the Star Tree project.
- the Congregation for their continued support of this project.
- Michelle Voelker for her assistance in helping set up the online program for giving to the Star Tree project

Respectfully submitted,
Gail Peterson, Chairman/Secretary

2021 Social Ministry Committee members: Sandy Briggs, Joie Gronert, Jane Ridnour, and Barb Zimany

Report from the Stewardship Committee

The past two years have been very challenging for all of us, and it is hard to even recall what normal even looked like before the pandemic. Grace has been blessed by the fact that despite these challenges, the members of Grace have continued to support the mission of Grace in so many ways. From the people who produce the online part of our worship service, those that volunteer to assist with worship, read lessons, provide music, or click like on the live Facebook feed, we have all been good stewards of faith here at Grace.

Thank you to all who have contributed to keeping Grace Lutheran Church a place to gather, in person and online, as a community of faith.

Statistics

2021: 89 pledges \$350,207

2022: 80 pledges \$371,250

Sincerely,

The Stewardship Team (Howard Kulzer, Chairperson, Norman Iverson, Tim Nelson, Jay Wangerin)

Altar Guild

The Altar Guild members at Grace prepare the altar for Sunday worship and assist with communion preparations and cleanup. Other responsibilities include any special preparation for the seasons of the church year such as Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter, and special events such as baptisms, weddings and funerals.

The group handles the care and maintenance of the paraments, linens, banners, and candles as needed for worship services. The following items were purchased throughout the year:

- Communion supplies
- Candle oil
- Cleaning supplies
- Seasonal supplies and decorations

A smaller group is designated for handling funerals and has helped prepare for those services this year that could be held at church. These are volunteers who help to prepare for the services as needed to meet the requests of the families for the worship space.

Altar Guild members resumed regular meetings as everyone was vaccinated; meeting outside or masked as the situation dictated. We used that time for fellowship and to discuss the group's duties for the next month. We ended our year by decorating the church for Christmas and then going on a "Nativity Crawl" to celebrate the end of another year.

By far our largest undertaking was as part of the church decluttering. All materials were sorted through and several old banners were thanked for their service and retired.

There were 11 volunteers that served on Altar Guild in 2021. Ten of those members will continue their service for 2022, with Cindy Peeler stepping back due to the continued strain of COVID on our healthcare workers. If you're interested in joining Altar Guild, please reach out to any current member for info! We have found it most beneficial to everyone's circumstances to maintain a collective leadership and whomever is available to take the lead on a certain item or issue does so.

Thank you to:

1. The Willing Workers and Men's Group for their assistance throughout the year.
2. The 2021 Altar Guild volunteers for their dedicated service: Sue Anderson, Kathy Bowermaster, Connie Heuton, Cindy Peeler, Gail Peterson, Jenny Rehder, Jane Ridnour, Amy Schmelzer, Rita Stackhouse, Carol Woodruff, and Melissa Young. Kathy also served as altar flower coordinator.

Budgeted amount for 2021: \$1,600
Expenses for 2021: \$ 912

Report respectfully submitted by the Grace Lutheran Church Altar Guild

Report from Cradle Roll

The Cradle Roll program ministers to parents with children between the ages of birth through age three.

“Splash!” materials from Augsburg Fortress press are used. The “Splash!” materials were updated during the past year in order to be more relevant to today’s parenting. Each month the parents receive a “Parent Page” appropriate for the age of their child. A music CD is included with the first parent page and again at the child’s 1st and 2nd birthdays. The materials are supplemented with additional materials at Christmas, Easter, and the child’s third birthday.

There are currently fifteen children enrolled in the Grace Cradle Roll.

Two member children were baptized during 2021. At the time of baptism, the parents are presented with a bible for their child. A wooden dove with the child’s name and baptismal date is added to the Baptismal Roll in the sanctuary. The dove is sent to the parents prior to the first anniversary of their child’s baptism. The bibles were purchased with funds received from the Grace Endowment Fund. Len Ringgenberg makes the doves which have been donated by Len and Helen in memory of their grandson, Alec Freese.

In September, two of the children aged out of the program.

Expenses include “Splash!” materials, postage, mailing and supplemental materials.

2021 Budget: \$ 450.00

Expenditures: \$ 389.78

Respectfully submitted,
Gail Peterson
Cradle Roll Coordinator

Report from Visiting Friends

The purpose of Visiting Friends is to bring loving care, attention, and concern to those who are isolated from our church family due to age, illness, or circumstance. By reaching out beyond the church walls, it is our hope that God's real presence may be sensed and felt wherever two or three are gathered. Visiting Friends may carry the Good News to members who are unable to get to the church and they may deliver/distribute communion to our friends at home. During previous years, Visiting Friends traveled to several local facilities and private residences to visit and distribute communion. While no home or facility visits took place during most of 2020 due to COVID-19, Visiting Friends kept in touch through telephone conversations and by mailing cards throughout 2021. Cheryl and Cherie have begun to graciously serve communion and we hope to increase this special ministry.

If you would like to know more about Visiting Friends, have questions about the ministry, or know of someone who may benefit from the ministry, please contact:

Cheryl Weatherington
Cherie Rissman

mnmweather@msn.com
cherierissman@gmail.com

Report from the Grace Library

Nothing to report. Looking forward to more use as our building opens up more in the future.

Report from the Companion Congregation Committee

The year has been difficult in Msindo and Mararo. The two churches cover a large area on the mountain and serve five to six hundred people, adults and children. The rains did not come on schedule (they have two rainy seasons and it is usually quite dry the rest of the year.) Hopefully, rain came after we spoke, but weather is unpredictable, as we in a farming state know.

The president of Tanzania, John Magufuli, said Covid was successfully being treated with home remedies. He died of Covid a few months later. The new president is the first woman, Samia Suluhu Hassan. This summer, we received an urgent message from Pastor John Joseph Mshana asking us to help find hand sanitizer for the churches (something hard to find there because the virus was near.) I talked to the doctor who consults and works with Empower Tanzania. He recommended helping with finding masks since other forms of hand washing are available there.

Our committee acted quickly to save lives: we sent masks (through Amazon) for the first line of defense and followed with money to purchase additional masks as needed. A local industry has developed among seamstresses to make masks of cloth, as has happened here. It seemed like the best solution to encourage local business, reduce transportation costs, and protect people from illness. I hope you approve of our actions.

One of our founding committee members, Azza Mmbaga, died in January, and his wife, Namkunda, who has been suffering from ill health, moved to Tanga to live with a daughter's family. What a huge loss! When we think of hospitality and wisdom, and successful joint ventures, we think of Azza and Namkunda, like Denny and Pat Rehder here. In the past, we would have sought their wisdom and guidance to come up with the best solutions. We miss them. When I think of Msindo, I think of Azza and Namkunda with love and admiration, and their home as a center of God's love and activities.

Finally, we are looking for new members for our Companion Congregation Committee. We have not been as active for the last few years, but as Covid restrictions are loosened, we would like to go for another visit. If you are interested, please contact Mary Freimuth Helt or Jane Ridnour.

On December 30, 2022, another of our original committee members will be retiring from the ministry. Pastor Ombeni Mbagha has a home in Msindo and was the pastor during our first visit. He has kindly invited us to attend his party. Congratulations to Ombeni on his devotion to ministry and retirement.

Mary Freimuth Helt, Secretary of Companion Congregation Committee

Lydia-Martha Circle

Lydia-Martha Circle did not meet during the 2021 year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the concern for the safety of our members.

During the pandemic "Keeping in Touch" correspondence has gone out to circle members for Birthdays, Get Well, and Sympathy. Other mailings have included cards for Valentine's Day, Easter, Ascension Day, 4th of July, Thinking of You, Thanksgiving and an Advent Calendar at Christmas. Since we were unable to do the gift bags and poinsettias in December this year, the Advent Calendar was also sent to those on the homebound list/prayer list and Sunday School families.

We look forward to the time when we can once again meet on the 4th Thursday of each month at 9:30 a.m. in Grace Hall. The November/December meeting is a combined meeting held in December. New members are always welcome.

Helen Ringgenberg and Marilyn Nizzi, Co-Chairs

Report from the Grace Garden Committee

Committee: Julie Honsey, Marion Nehmer, Carla Peterman, Michelle Voelker

Cleanup and other assistance: Scott Honsey, Gary Nehmer, Mike Peterman, Rich Voelker

We reviewed what worked well and decided what new things we wanted to try. We each signed up to purchase some of the seeds and plants. Carla drew up the garden map to hang in the shed.

The garden remains incredibly productive.

- We grew peas, okra, broccoli, Swiss Chard, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, beans, pole beans, turnips, kohlrabi, beets, carrots, radishes, tomatillos, white and purple eggplant, and onions. Some of the crops, such as eggplant, tomatoes, peppers, and okra were incredibly prolific for the small amount of space they used.
- We planted sweet potatoes in grow bags outside of the garden again. This year they were especially prolific, with one of our best harvests yet.
- A variety of squash and radishes were planted with the help of the Grace Kids Care 3 year old class. Some of the squash seeds saved from previous years mutated, producing an orange acorn/delicata mutation, but still tasty.
- Beans and Okra were highly prized at the food pantry.

Little Free Pantry: We continued to place small amounts of produce at the Little Free pantry on harvest days. Most of it was picked up within hours. Occasionally someone would ask about produce as we packed up for the day and they were able to “shop” through what was available. Several of us have noted that in 2 hours of garden work we often see 3-4 people stop at the LFP, some filling it, some taking what they need. Many are friendly and stop to talk.

Compost: We were able to top off another raised bed with our own finished compost, and at the end of Fall 2021, have yet another bin of almost finished compost that should be ready by planting time. The emptied bins were filled to the top during garden cleanup.

Help: Help us plan, starting seeds, providing plants, planting, watering, harvesting, and/or cleanup. One or two hours a summer or a week, the garden is a lovely place to rest, listen to nature, breathe deeply, and serve others. You won't regret any time spent there. Come sit on the bench in the garden and enjoy the peace. Contact any of the garden crew– we promise to help and respect your time.

Sincerely,

Michelle Voelker, Julie Honsey, Marion Nehmer, Carla Peterman, and all the volunteers and recipients

Report from the Memorial Fund Committee

All memorial money donated to Grace Lutheran Church is deposited to a reserve account with memorials for each individual tracked separately. Purchases from these funds are made according to the needs of the congregation and the desires of the family.

Contributions received from January 1 - December 31, 2021 were in memory of:

Frances Best, LaRue Buihner, Morris (Mo) Grotheer, Marvin Johns, Leonard Larsen, Sally Niffenegger, Anna Marie Peterson, Evelyn Reistroffer, Jason Schmidt, and Vivian Swanson, adding a total of \$24,563 to the fund.

No Disbursements in 2021.

The December 31, 2021 balance in the Memorial reserve account is \$33,407

Prayer Quilt Ministry

The Prayer Quilt Ministry at Grace Lutheran Church was begun in October 2015. On occasion a quilt frame with a quilt is set up in the Sanctuary. Each quilt is finished except for the tying of the knots. Members are invited to tie one of the knots and say a prayer for the recipient and family as they do. The recipient is announced during the service or noted in the written announcements that week. The quilt is then delivered when all the knots have been tied and the recipient will know that each knot represents a prayer for him/her.

A personalized label is made for each quilt and is sewn to the back of the quilt. The label reads as follows:

**This quilt was made for
(Name)
With love, hope and prayers from your friends at
Grace Lutheran Church (Date)
As each knot on this quilt was tied,
a prayer was said especially for you.
“Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything
together in perfect harmony.” Colossians 3:14
May you know the love of God, and the love of so many people
shown in the prayers said in the making of this quilt. Amen**

Unfortunately, in 2021 the committee has been unable to make any Prayer Quilts for Grace members due to the COVID pandemic. We look forward to the future when we can once again safely activate the Prayer Quilt Ministry here at Grace Lutheran Church.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Ringgenberg, Carol Krause, Gail Peterson

Member Care

The Member Care Team continues its ministry of assisting Grace members in time of need: illness/surgery or loss of a family member. This may include providing meals, transportation, visits, cards and/or phone calls. Due to the situation, this may be a one-time contact or one that extends over a period of time. Grace members may request Member Care Team contact through Pastor Mike or by calling the church office.

With the continued Covid-19 quarantine during 2021 it was necessary to continue to provide purchased meals or restaurant/grocery gift cards to those in need. This is the reason for the increase in expenditures this year.

Holiday cards were sent to members on the Home Bound/Prayer List throughout the year. “Thinking of you” cards were sent in those months in which there were no holidays. Member contact continued to be through phone calls and/or email.

All Grace members are in our thoughts and prayers during this time. We would like to suggest you take the time to reach out to others to let them know you are thinking about them. This is an important part of our ministry.

For 2021:

Beginning balance 12-31-2020	\$1,398.45
Less Supplies/Cards/Postage/Gift Cards/Groceries	\$ 884.50
Add Donation Received	\$ 250.00
Ending Balance 12-31-2021	\$763.95

2021 Member Care Team members

Jill Boeschen, Joie Gronert, Mary Helt, Connie Heuton, Gail Peterson, Jane Ridnour, Melissa Young

Lutheran World Relief Team Report

Your Lutheran World Relief Team is grateful for the outstanding support we have received during the year 2021, and all the very generous donations of money, time and talent that have kept us active during these challenging times.

Thank you to those who cut fabric, designed blocks, sewed or tied quilts, collected or created kit contents and packing boxes, and packed kits.

Thank you to those who cleaned up after the sewer flooding in Msindo Hall and the quilt room.

Gifts from a Thrivent Action Team Grant were also used to purchase batting for quilts.

We conducted one fundraising event in the spring, and received our largest ever donation, allowing us to send \$10,500 directly to LWR to go to areas of greatest need. In two ingathering events, we sent a total of 95 quilts, 203 school kits, 201 personal care kits, 30 baby care kits, and 101 masks.

Our treasurer's report is printed below.

We look forward to the next ingathering event in the Spring 2022!

Gratefully submitted,

LWR Team: Alice Kulzer, Allison Olson, Barb Zimany, Beth Flannery, Cathy Watson, Gail Peterson, Helen Ringgenberg, Jessye Flannery, Jill Boesch, Kathy Piltingsrud, Mary Jo McCleary, Mary Weaverling, Nancy Crowfoot

Lutheran World Relief Account Year End Report 2021

BALANCE ON HAND - January 1, 2021		\$ 550.59
INCOME:		
Donations Received (January-June)	11,916.00	
Donations Received (July-December)	<u>580.00</u>	
Total Income		+ 12,496.00
		13,046.59
DISBURSEMENTS:		
Contributions to LWR	10,500.00	
Kit Supplies Expense	<u>1,578.71</u>	
Total Disbursements		- 12,078.71
BALANCE ON HAND - December 31, 2021		<u>\$ 967.88</u>

Report from the Property Committee

While we had all hoped that “normalcy” would return in 2021 after suffering through the effects of COVID 19 in 2020, such was not the case. Resumption of full activities and normal operation still awaits the time when the health concerns related to the pandemic are in our rear-view mirror. Much of what we had hoped to do from a property improvement standpoint has again been delayed, but there were some actions taken by both choice and necessity.

Maintenance items and property improvements made during 2021 include:

- Landscaping at and near the Little Free Pantry and Library (funded by a generous grant from the Endowment Committee).
- Cleanup and repairs necessitated by a sewer backup in Msindo Hall on September 11, 2021. Expenses for which we were fully reimbursed by the City of Des Moines.
- Purchase and installation of 7 new high efficiency furnaces serving sanctuary, Msindo Hall & Upper Room.
- Boilers: Hydronic loop and boilers that serve new addition, Grace Hall and 3rd floor have been noisy for over a year; the source of the issue has been identified and a permanent fix is underway.
- Minor repairs and upgrades at Todd’s House (3024 52nd Street)
- HVAC system setting were adjusted after GKC closed due to lower occupancy during the week.
- Also, with closure of GKC, our 10-burner gas stove/oven in kitchen is not being used; vendor came in and has temporarily turned off the pilot lights for energy savings.

As was true last year, while one would think that limited use of our facility for this past year would mean less “wear and tear” on things, the mechanical systems, lighting and plumbing are still needed and require regular maintenance, and the forces of mother nature on the exterior of the building are still at work, with the effects they have on roofs, walls, windows and doors.

In 2019, work was begun on planning for a Capital Campaign that we had hoped would have been conducted in 2020. This campaign has again been delayed. Most of the needs that would be addressed by a Capital Campaign still exist, such that we hope to resume planning for this during this upcoming year.

The Property Committee again wishes to thank our custodian, Todd Haugen for keeping the building and grounds well cared for and for all his work to accommodate the many activities that take place within the church every week. We would also like to thank the members of the property committee, and all others, including the Willing Workers and the Saturday Morning Men’s Group, who contribute their time and talents to the upkeep and improvement of the church property.

A special thank you to Eric Weber for his continual efforts to ensure that our heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems are in proper working order. Eric was instrumental in overseeing the replacement of the seven furnaces that serve the Sanctuary, Msindo Hall and the Upper Room in November.

We are grateful for all Grace volunteers! Our Grace group of Willing Workers meets on most Thursday mornings at 9 a.m. to help with a variety of property needs. And the Saturday Men’s Group meets for devotions, donuts and tasks on the second Saturday of the month. More volunteers are always welcome.

As stated in the 2020 Property Committee report, we are hoping to reorganize and revitalize the Property Committee, with an emphasis on encouraging individual members and congregational organizations to “adopt” portions of the physical plant to address specific needs for continual cleaning and maintenance. The details of this plan have still not been put into action. Please consider how you might be able to contribute to this effort with the giving of your time and talents.

Respectfully submitted,
Don Peterson (Chair), Chuck Denton, Norm Iverson, Jay Wangerin, Dean Watson, Eric Weber

**Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church
Columbarium Fund**

Cash Balance of December 31, 2020	\$13,594.45
Receipts:	
Interest on funds	\$ 6.80
Deposits	\$ 0.00
Disbursements	\$267.00
Cash Balance of December 31, 2021	\$13,334.25

Members that have purchased niches – McIntyre, Tussing, Frost, Krauss, Rehder, Iverson, Buihner, Page, Batten, Singh, Zimany, and Knudsen.

No niches were purchased in 2021.

Grace Lutheran Church has a Columbarium in the Prayer Chapel. Grace's Columbarium is a forty-eight companion Garden Niche Columbarium that accommodates a maximum of ninety-six cremation urns. The purchase price of each niche is \$1,200.

It has always been the obligation of the church to serve its congregation from baptism to death. Although earth burial on church grounds is not feasible at Grace, the desire to continue this sacred rite remains for some members.

The Columbarium at Grace allows us to revive the crucial ministry of offering a rightful place at the church for those who have come before us. It also comforts the living with the knowledge that we too will be welcomed home to the church.

Report of the Endowment Committee

The purpose of the Grace Lutheran Church Endowment Fund is to promote faithful Christian stewardship by providing a congregational plan to receive grants, gifts or bequest of money to be used to enhance the total program and mission of the Church beyond that supported through regular giving and apart from the general operation of the congregation. The Endowment Fund Committee acts as custodian of the Fund.

The Endowment Committee approved the following distributions of 2020 income, which was distributed in March of 2021.

Awards to Grace Lutheran Church:

- \$2,500 for sidewalks and landscaping
- \$460 for Kids Care strollers
- \$283 for Kids Care closet

Other Awards:

- \$7,000 to Lutheran Lakeside Camp for event center deck repair
- \$1,500 to Another Child Foundation for Noemi's closet

A total of \$11,743 was awarded. Requests for grants totaled \$20,970.

Since inception, the Endowment fund has awarded a total of **\$349,583** to **191** projects.

Your Endowment Committee,
McKenzie Carney (Chairman), John Justice (Secretary), Gary Nehmer, Kari Dostalík and Stacie Holst

Election of Endowment Fund Committee Members

Members include: McKenzie Carney (Chairman), John Justice (Secretary), Gary Nehmer, Kari Dostalík and Stacie Holst.

Report of the Finance Committee

Grace Lutheran Church

The Church results were above budget in 2021. Overall, a surplus of \$57,948 was incurred as compared to a \$20,000 deficit budget. This was primarily due to the forgiveness of the \$44,510 Payroll protection program loan the Church received in 2020. The results were also impacted with the departure of the Director of Youth and Family during the year.

Highlights of actual activity include the following:

- Pledged, unpledged and other offerings were below prior year but comparable to budget.
- Overall, expenses were below budget. This was primarily due to the open staffing position, lower utilities offset by higher maintenance.

Budgeted activity for 2022 reflects a surplus of \$5,000. Highlights include the following:

- Pledged offering activity is above 2021 actual activity, while pledging units are down.
- Other income has decreased with the elimination of the Daycare thank offering.
- Budget for 2022 replaces the youth and family position with an intern pastor position whose budgeted activity is only for a portion of the year due to the timing in filling the position.
- Overall staffing costs are comparable to 2021 but lower than 2021 budgeted activity. Total staffing costs are approximately \$245,000 and represent 57% of the total operational costs of the Church.
- The budget for the professional leadership positions includes salary, employer taxes, pension and medical insurance.
- Synod Benevolence is unchanged from 2021.
- All other expense activity is comparable to the prior year.
- The activity for debt service reflects interest only on the debt to the Endowment Fund. This \$275,000 debt has an interest rate of 3%.

Not included in the above results is the activity of the Capital Campaign. During 2021, \$168,296 was received from members, estates and Daycare, \$32,584 was spent on furnace replacements. For the entire campaign, \$229,221 has been received and \$91,904 spent on building improvements.

Grace Daycare

Grace Daycare closed during the year due to Covid. Staffing challenges and declines in student enrollment led to this decision. During 2020 the Daycare received a PPP loan from the Federal Government of \$69,307. This was forgiven in 2021. These monies along with the final cash balance of \$15,609 were transferred to the Grace Capital Campaign.

Your Finance Committee,
Kevin Krause (chair), Kevin Drury, Paul Kallenbach (Financial Secretary), Tom Selander (Treasurer), Rick Stammer

Change and the need for creativity have become constants over the last year and a half in many aspects of life, including the church. This was the case for **Living Christ Lutheran Church** in Flagstaff, Ariz., even before a global pandemic caused many of us to rethink what it means to be church. Generosity from all three expressions of the ELCA (the churchwide organization, the Grand Canyon Synod and members of Living Christ) helped turn a congregation “on the road out of town, near the mall” into an online presence reaching over 500 people a week from Phoenix to the Philippines. (Read more about Living Christ in the current issue of “**Stories of Faith in Action**” at [ELCA.org/SOFIA](https://www.elca.org/SOFIA).)

Many other congregations have found new ways to connect both when in-person worship was impossible and when congregations began to return to their sanctuaries. Generosity, especially through Mission Support, helped us find and support these new ways of being connected. Early in the pandemic, ELCA Worship launched the “Worship in the Home” webpage, with Scripture, hymn links, prayers and reflections for each

Sunday. These resources were and continue to be used in congregations across the ELCA—even at **Sitka Lutheran Church** in Alaska, whose members printed and hand-delivered “Worship in the Home” resources to fellow members without internet access.

Change and creativity have taught us many things. As Pastor Sandra Rudd of Sitka Lutheran Church noted, “The pandemic was a stark illustration of the fact that the church is not a building. A lot of people say that, but we didn’t fully know it until we didn’t have a building to use. We learned that there are many ways to be connected as the church.” Throughout the pandemic, the ELCA has changed and adapted, doing ministry in new and creative ways, because of the generosity of its members. Even now, you may be gathering in a new way for your annual meeting, to discern how you will steward the gifts shared generously with your congregation to do ministry in your community and beyond. As you have these important conversations, remember that your gifts of time, talent and resources have helped create new spaces beyond our walls and buildings where we continue to worship, serve and love God and each other.

ANNUAL REPORT

2021