



2020 Annual Report

Second Edition





Minutes of the 2019 Annual Meeting November 17

The meeting was officially called to order by Kathy Slater, Council President, with a quorum of 64 people. Pastor Chris opened with prayer at 12:40. A video of pictures from 2019 was shown.

This is the second year we are holding our Annual Meeting in the Fall rather than the Winter. The Fall time frame means that the meeting will not have to contend with the bad weather that caused cancellations and delays like previous years. This year's process was the same as 2018. The 2020 budget was presented to the Congregation five weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. This year we had the "Council is in Booth" available to the Congregation at the end of several services during the month of October. On November 3rd we had a Town Hall meeting which gave the Congregation an opportunity to ask questions, make comments and share concerns. Council appreciates and thanks the Congregation for their input. The minutes for the 2018 annual meeting were incorrect. We had the March 2018 printed instead of the November 2018 minutes. Congregation took time to look over the corrected minutes. Approval of the minutes from the 2018 Annual Meeting. Motion made by Vinny Tipa, seconded by Heidi Bornemann to approve the minutes. All in favor.

Report of the Council President: Kathy Slater. The following people were thanked: Carl Gebauer for his six years of service on Council. Nancy Eichorn for ten years as Financial Secretary. Sarah Wilson for preparing the 2020 budget and all her help on the finance committee.

Nominations for the 2020 Congregation Council: The following people were nominated to Council: Thomas Hoover (3-year term) He accepted. Susan Prazenka and Bruce Waldman agreed to stay on Council for another term. Nominations for the 2019 Nominating Committee: Dan Hughes, Roy Heinrich, Heidi Bornemann, Nedra Thomas, Carl Gebauer (outgoing Council member), Motion made by Paul Kopilak to approve the whole slate. All in favor.

Presentation of the 2020 proposed budget presented by Sarah Wilson. We set the goal higher in envelope giving by \$5,000 for 2020. The Pentecostals of Yorktown annual rental income was factored into the budget. There

is an additional income line for the Pentecostals of Yorktown. Expenses are pretty much flat. The Personnel Committee recommended to Council and Council approved increases in the Personnel budget for salary increases and cost increases in ELCA required health insurance coverage. As Grace does every year, half of the lease income from the Verizon antenna array in the steeple was moved into Grace's dedicated Capital Improvement Fund for large capital projects. Heather Adams asked "What does projected mean?" Sarah Wilson responded that the Projection represented in Grace's Budget is ten months of 2019 actual income/expense with the addition of 2018 November and December expense/income added in for a 2019 projection of annual income/expense. Sarah Wilson mentioned the Building Use Supplement line being \$3,670 as reflecting two years worth of compensation to the Sexton and Office Manager and should be reduced to \$1,835 to reflect just the 2019 expense. Victor Eichorn asked "What about the money for the Metro NY Synod?" Pastor Chris responded that for every dollar we give to the MNYS, \$.55 cents goes to the ELCA Churchwide office in Chicago and \$.45 stays with the MNYS. A Motion was made by Heidi Bornemann to accept the 2020 budget as amended. Lynne Carney seconded. All in favor.

Open the floor to the Congregation for questions and concerns. Maria Hughes spoke about Art Schroder not being well. He does an awful lot for the Finance committee. Maybe we can get some young people involved and share some of the duties. Jeff Kellogg said Art Schroder is doing much better and will be back to Church. Paul Kopilak commented on how well the acolytes are doing on Sunday. The Congregation recognized Kathy Slater for her service as President of the Council. Kathy Slater commented that she could not do what she had to do if she did not have the support of Pastor Chris and the Council. Victor Eichorn asked about Grace's 3 Synodical Deacons still in "On Leave from Call" status: Carol Straub, Chuck Rogler and Peg Lindblom. Pastor Chris responded that according to the requirements of the MNYS, when Pastor Kennedy retired the deacons were automatically put on "On Leave from Call" status until the new pastor was called. Pastor Chris was then given 6 months to meet with the 3 Deacons and decide whether to suggest to the congregation that their status be changed to either, "Removed from Call," or Restored to Call." Pastor Chris was not made aware of this requirement by the MNYS because the MNYS had staff changes and connecting with new Pastor's about how to proceed with congregational deacons slipped through the cracks. The intention is to move forward next year with updating out Deacon's call status. Chuck Rogler is still involved in the men's group. Carol Straub is responsible for the

worship assistants. Peg Lindblom is at home recuperating. Vinny Tipa wanted to recognize the property committee for all they have done this past year and are still doing: Painted the Sunday school rooms, worked on the Parsonage, and the Memorial Garden. Thank you to Art Schroder, Susan Prazenka, Carl Gebauer, Doug Lee and Dan Hughes. Maria Hughes spoke about opening our doors to the POY and how we



Pictured from L to R: Kim Iamiceli, Joan Kennedy, Bruce Waldman, Kathy Slater, Thomas Hoover, Joanmarie Kopilak, Susan Prazenka, Leslie Knauf & Doug Lee. Not pictured are Sarah Wilson, Nancy Eichorn, Art Schroder & Pastor Chris

Council President Report

Kathy Slater

Last year I discussed the branches of the Grace Family and the need to ensure they are nurtured and grow. This past year has tested the roots of Grace like never before.

As I reflect on the programs and ministries at Grace in 2020, I can't help but think of the night in early March when Pastor Chris sat in my kitchen and discussed closing church due to the Covid-19 virus. It was difficult enough in February to make the decision to suspend the sharing of the peace and communion, but never would I have thought we would have to close our church doors as we did on March 8th.

God's Word brings comfort during difficult times and our country was heading into a period that no one ever experienced in our lifetime. How do we close the doors of our church? Like many of you, when life gets challenging, I rely on attending church to keep me faith-centered and obtain strength from my church family to ensure my faith does not waiver. Church is our safe place, whereas a small child we are taught to love our neighbor and be there to help them in times of need.

This pandemic is certainly a time when we need our church family the most! God watched over our congregation and provided Pastor Chris with the

will be blessed as well. Joanmarie Kopilak made them feel so welcomed on their first day at Grace. Pastor Nelson's son was in awe of the Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall and the classrooms. Chuck Rogler mentioned the Garden of Hope in Peekskill. They were able to deliver vegetables to the food pantry.

Pastor Chris closed the meeting with prayer at 1:15pm.



spiritual leadership and talents to bring His Word to us each Sunday, even though we were not physically together. This included not only our Sunday services, but also the beautiful midweek prayer services that brought the extra comfort during this most difficult time. We also cannot forget the dedication and long hours that Doug Jenkins and Samantha deGraffenried put in to ensure production was top quality and available to us all.

As our community started to reopen, we were able to hold our first in-person worship services on June 14th - with many new restrictions in place. There are still Covid restrictions to follow, such as no sharing of the peace, communion, no singing and no coffee hour. Pews remain closed to ensure social distancing which means possibly not sitting in our normal spots. However, if you are like me, anxiety remains about gathering, even for worship, so we continue to praise God from the comfort and safety of home. What can Grace do to help overcome this fear? Will the "new" normal include both in person and online worship or will people overcome their anxiety and return to worship as we knew it?

No one knows what the "new" normal will look like, but when we put our trust in God, He will guide us. Although we can't meet in person, as you continue reading about the programs and ministries at Grace, you will see that some have continued to meet virtually to perform God's work and spread his love which is needed now more than ever.

These ministries and outreach are the branches that I discussed in my report last year that we need to grow and strengthen to fit in today's world. 2020 has certainly tested the strength of the roots and trunk of our mighty oak tree that is Grace. It is more important than ever that we continue to live and share our faith with those around us and we have been able to do this because of the time, talent and financial support provided by you, the people of Grace.

As my grandson Charlie says, when this pandemic is over, we are going to have the biggest party ever. I look forward to that day when we can all be physically together and raise our voices in praise to God.

God's Blessings,
Kathy Slater



Pastor's Report

Pastor Chris

I give thanks to God for a third, but highly unusual, year as your Pastor! Rather than reflecting as usual in the Pastor's Report on the number of Baptisms, 1st Communion, Confirmation, Weddings, Visitations and Funerals – some of which I have been able to do – I instead want to reflect on how out of my 28 years in ordained ministry this is the longest I have not served Communion, sung a hymn with a congregation, visited at your home or been able to pray with the sick and dying. In Scripture we hear often of God's people being brought into wilderness experiences where nothing is the same as it was before. Clearly, this Covid experience qualifies as a wilderness experience! However, in Scripture it is always the case that God's people come out of the wilderness transformed in wonderful ways that that they could not have imagined before entering the wilderness and always, always, always, they come out closer to God. Again, this is also proving to be true for our Covid wilderness, too.



Last November as Grace was looking forward to the usual joy and celebration of the upcoming Holidays, we could never have imagined that we would be spending Lent and Easter not worshipping together at all in Grace. We had no vision or plan at that point to do anything with on-line worship or virtual meetings, Bible studies, Sunday School, Confirmation Classes, support groups, etc. Yet, here we are, having not only adapted and endured, but prevailed in abundant success! While attendance in-person is only averaging 57 people across our three (!) Sunday morning services (100 less than 10/2019), Grace is averaging 310 views of Sunday worship online through FaceBook, Youtube and Webex platforms. Since it seems that the Covid situation is not going to allow us to make any changes in our worship practices in the next several months, it seems that, by the time we are “able” to gather in-person more fully, the online options will be here to stay and Grace will need to consider how to move forward in a “hybrid” mode. The same seems to true for meetings and Bibles studies and everything else that we are learning can be more efficiently and conveniently done online, with opportunity for in-person gathering, too, to meet that much wanted social component. Responding to the Social Distancing requirements of the Covid experience has also meant that Grace added an third, outdoor, worship opportunity on Sunday morning for the first time and it is marvelous – certainly something we will be sad to see come to an end as the weather gets too cold for comfort, but which we will certainly want to reinstate in the Spring or Summer. These are all wonderful things that we have learned in our wilderness experience.

As I mentioned, in the Bible when God's people come out of the wilderness they find themselves closer to God – more ready than before to be God's faithful people. For me the most powerful example of this is Jesus, himself, who immediately after being baptized (not as an infant, of course, but probably when he was about 30 years old) he was taken by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the Devil. After 40 days of fasting and prayer the Devil tempted Jesus to “fix” the “problems” he was facing by using his power and gifts to take care of his needs instead of remaining faithful in all things: make bread from stones to break the fast God has set for him; jump from the pinnacle of the Temple steeple to check on whether God would really keep God's word; worship Satan to gain authority over the world rather than go to the cross and receive the true power and promise of death and resurrection. Jesus stayed faithful no matter the apparent cost and no matter the apparent expediency of doing otherwise in the moment. When Jesus left his wilderness experience he was ready to carry out God's plan for him with perfect faithfulness. Here at Grace, I am confident that, as we read in Scripture, the same will happen for us. While we are standing in the middle of the wilderness it is hard to have a vision for how things will really be when we leave this wilderness – that's why it is all about faith and hope right now. And right now, it is also all about not looking to do what seems most convenient, reasonable or expedient to preserve Grace, it is about remaining faithful in all things. Out of obedience to the command to “love your neighbor” Grace continues to abide by the requirements of wearing masks, limiting attendance, wearing masks, social distancing and not singing together. We also vigilantly look to respond to the needs of those in our community, those outside our community, and those around the world who are suffering from the virus' impact. Grace also seeks to be faithful by still gathering for hearing the Word, speaking our praise and prayers and offering our gifts of thanks as best we can. It is also because of our commitment to being as faithful as possible that we have continued our own fasting in the wilderness and not tried to engineer and strangely sanitized representation of “gathering” at the Lord's Table to receive an exceptionally individuated piece of the “loaf” and sip of the “cup.” In the Scripture we learn that God's people are not in the wilderness forever. This time will come to an end and we can have the hope and faith that we will not come out weaker and more distanced, but closer, more faithful, and equipped with new gifts and skills to meet the challenge of being the builders of God's Kingdom, now. I am so very grateful to everyone for their continued prayers for Grace, for your brothers and sisters in Christ, and for me. I also give thanks to God for the steadfast devotion Grace has shown in continuing to make offerings of thanks and give gifts of love and support that sustain our

ministry and further God's good work even in these unusual days.

Even though it does seem that Grace is going to continue on in pretty much the same way for at least the first part of 2020, I am excited about the plans and energy we have for moving forward. I eagerly look forward to the Sunday when we are once again able to gather and sing our praises while gathering at the Lord's Table safely. Until then, stay safe. Stay well and help someone else do the same if you can.

Peace, Pastor Chris



Altar Guild

Nancy Eichorn

Most of the Altar Guild duties have been put on hold since the start of the pandemic in March. Carol Hoover comes to the church each Saturday to change the eternal candle and put on the altar flowers, which have graciously been donated by the members of the Guild.

We were in the process of purchasing new communion ware, but that has been put on hold. Hopefully, this can resume in the near future.

After we can move past the pandemic our hopes are to get back to normal, serving the people of Grace, by maintaining the altar and preparing the communion elements for each Sunday.

The Guild would like to thank Nadine Ziegler, who faithfully served as chairperson for many years. Carol Hoover has taken over for Nadine as chairperson, with Nancy Eichorn and Flo Nangendo as co-chairs.



Evangelism Committee

Bruce Waldman

The pandemic has limited the opportunities of the Evangelism committee this year. The church itself has done tremendous things with the broadcast of church services on several social media platforms dramatically increasing our outreach to the local community.

When we return to normal or near normal, it will be time to pivot into the next world situation – whatever that may be. We are considering:

How to energize people to return to church activities – we need to devise methods to do this. In the old world we might consider making phone calls etc. but now we fear this may be ineffective since most calls will be screened out by anti-spam filters. So how to do this in our new environment? The best choice would seem to be through multiple social platforms. The church most likely needs a committee focused just on this activity. In any case, we should immediately update all of our media to highlight what is currently going on – such as Pastor Chris' Bible Studies.

It will be time to ask new questions. Are we effectively engaging unbelievers and the unchurched? The response to our on-line church services gives us some hints to the power of on-line activities. When we return to "normal" are we giving guests a clear pathway to become a disciple of Jesus and to multiply that experience?

Does our community know that we exist? Sarah Wilson has led us in many of the activities that expose the community to us – such as the local street fairs and market as well as the Repair Café. We need to continue to do these things as they become allowed and safe. Community use of our wonderful facility will also help.

What do we want them to know about us? The church is open to All interested in the Lutheran theology. We need to continue highlighting this openness.

What are other churches doing – what best practices can we learn from them?



Personnel Committee

Gary Knock

Prior to the necessary closing of the church because of the coronavirus pandemic, the Personnel Committee was meeting on a monthly basis. At most of these meetings the committee focused on the creation of a handbook for church employees. Significant progress was made on this effort until it became necessary to set aside work on the handbook because of the closing of the church. The committee continued the practice of mailing birthday cards to members of the church staff during this time.

Following the church closing, the committee met twice virtually. At the first of these meetings, Pastor Chris explained the changes made to protect staff members and to continue the necessary functions they perform. Hours of service were altered to avoid or

minimize contact with people. Building maintenance was accomplished at times when no one other than the sexton was in the building. The hours worked by the parish administrator were changed to minimize contact with the public but also maintain telephone and email contacts. Immediately after the closing, the director of music made at-home performance videos which were included in the virtual worship services. Later, the director of music provided music in person at worship services. Pastor Chris carried on his usual functions but always observed safety measures when in contact with people. Pastor Chris assured the committee that necessary staff functions were being performed under conditions that were challenging.

At the second virtual meeting, the committee addressed the reality that this year it would not be safe to implement the job performance reviews for each of the staff members. Also, the committee was aware that while members had continued to support the church financially during the closing, the financial status of the congregation for the coming year is unknown. For these reasons, the committee determined that it would advance a recommendation to the Congregation Council that staff salaries remain at current levels for the coming year. Attached to this recommendation is the committee's desire to review staff salaries six months into 2021.

In the coming year the committee hopes to continue the development of a handbook for employees, to review staff salaries at a point halfway into the year, and to resume job performance reviews.



Prayer List Ministries

Doug Jenkins

I have been blessed to be able to continue Grace's email prayer list. During this time of isolation, it is an important part of us keeping in touch. I pray that those dealing with grief or loss are comforted knowing others are praying for them. We grieve with those who grieve, we rejoice with those who rejoice. Prayer requests or updates can be sent to: prayerlist@graceyorktown.org, or by replying to any of the prayer list emails. If you are not yet receiving the emails you can contact me at that email address or Kristen at office@graceyorktown.org, and we will ensure you are added to the list.

I want to give special thanks for Cheryl Kellogg's part in this ministry. Cheryl sends cards to those on the prayer list with personal messages to let them know they are being prayed for. In this digital age, where handwritten letters and cards are all but a thing of the

past, these handwritten cards are wonderful examples of the Church reaching out to its members in need.



Synodical Deacon Internship

Doug Jenkins

Just about a year ago my internship "ended" with the final evaluations from Pastor, my support committee, and myself sent to the Diaconate Council. Following the Diaconate Council approval, the paperwork was forwarded to the Bishop for his approval.

On my side, I met with the Grace Council for their approval and created a Letter of Call that will be forwarded to the Bishop following a Congregational vote to Call me. The Special Congregational meeting to extend a Call to be a Deacon at Grace was scheduled for last March 15, which just so happened to be the first Sunday the church building was closed, and we stopped worshipping in person.

Though the internship was over, ministries continue. Some of my activities during 2020:

- Recording Sermons and Children's Sermons for the Grace Facebook pages
- Visiting several Grace members in the hospital, assisted-living facilities, rehab, and at home
- Continuing a free computer help workshop once or twice a month
- Continuing the Grace email prayer ministry
- Continuing to provide a Christian service at The Paramount at Somers Manor

Another major project was rebuilding Grace's website. It started out last year as a proof-of-concept using a copy of the WordPress website from St. John's of Mamaroneck to see how that would work. Through several meetings and email discussions, we defined what we wanted the new site to look like and I worked to implement the design. The new website is at www.graceyorktown.org.

Once the pandemic hit and in-person worship was canceled, Samantha and Pastor created videos for Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings, and I hosted them with Facebook Watch Parties to share the videos "live". Once we started in-person worship, we started live-streaming our indoor services to our Facebook Public and Private pages and recording the outdoor service. The inside services are uploaded to our YouTube channel and website shortly after each inside service. The recorded outside service is uploaded during the afternoon after I get home from church. The videos are included on the Services page on our website.

Many thanks to Samantha for her guidance on streaming and building slides for our livestreaming software.

I look forward to continuing serving Grace through these ministries and more, as God leads.



Property Committee

*Carl Gebauer, Vinnie Tipa, Art Schroder,
Dan Hughes, Doug Lee, Dave Colagiovanni*

- Despite the difficulties presented us by the Covid-19 Virus this year, the Properties Committee made headway with our long list of improvements to the facilities and grounds at Grace.
- Among the indoor projects were the cleanup, organization and painting of the Café, and measures taken to be in compliance with the fire code of Yorktown. Outdoor projects included lighting upgrades, drainage work, power washing and grounds maintenance. Work to be done yet this fall is the installation of a paved surface at the rear of the church using on site materials, necessary tree work at the parsonage, and further brick engraving at the Memorial Garden. Next spring, we plan to make much necessary improvements to the parking lots when the weather is conducive to do so.
- The current Covid-19 restrictions deprived us the opportunity to meet as frequently as in the past as a group to work on projects together. Those undertaken were done working singly or in small groups well distanced. We are hoping next year things will improve so we can work together again safely and productively and enjoy the satisfaction of a job well done.



Report of the Deacons

Carol Straub

During 2020, I continued to serve as a Metro New York Synodically Rostered Deacon on Leave from Call. Prior to the pandemic, I was able to continue to serve in the following areas:

- Preparing Monthly Assisting Ministers Schedules and Worship Assistants Schedules for all worship services
- Sending weekly email reminders to all Worship Assistants scheduled to serve the following Sunday
- Arranging for Worship Assistant substitutes or replacements when needed
- Coordinating Name Tag Sundays on the second Sunday of each month
- Preparing and making announcements at worship services
- Serving as a Eucharistic Minister
- Facilitator of Grace's Widowed Support Group
- Member of the Worship and Music Committee

Since the onset of the pandemic, I have continued be in touch with the ten members of Grace's Widowed Support Group. Thanks to Pastor Chris, we are able to continue to meet once a month via Webex. Since not all members are always able to attend, I keep in touch with everyone via phone, email, or snail mail. I have also continued to serve on the Worship & Music Committee.

During this year, I continue to be blessed to have the opportunity to share my gifts and talents with my fellow members of Grace. I plan to continue to serve as long as I am able and look forward to receiving a Letter of Call renewing my service at Grace.

In His Service, Deacon D. Carol B. Straub



Report of the Widowed Support Group

Carol Straub

During 2020 Grace continued to provide a Widowed Support Group for 10 people and met at Grace in January and February. After the pandemic started, we began having virtual meetings in April with the computer assistance from Pastor Chris. It was wonderful as everyone participating had a chance to see and speak with each other! Although not all participate in the virtual meetings, everyone does receive snail mail and phone calls before and after the meetings, so we continue to provide support to everyone. The Widowed Support Group is open to anyone who has lost a spouse. If you are interested in joining or would like more information, please contact me at 845-225-8126 or dcbstraub@verizon.net.



KEMPS

Bob Schmut

This Year:

- 'Adopted' Aaron Rwechungura at KEMPS in memory of Roy Peterson
- One of our children graduated from KEMPS and is now in a Lutheran Secondary School. She is studying to be a Lutheran Pastor



Impact of Covid:

- Communication with the children at KEMPS interrupted until June 29th when classes resumed
- Pen-Pal Letters delayed with mailing problems in Tanzania



Social Ministry Committee

Sarah Wilson

While many of our activities were curtailed this year by the closure of the church building, we continued to meet on the 3rd Monday of each month (via Webex effective in March). You do not have to “join” our committee to take part in planning our ministry work. If you wish to participate, contact either Sarah, Georgette or Pastor Chris so we can include you in our email list and share the conferencing link with you.



Grace members continued their strong support of **The Community Food Pantry (CFP) at St. Mary's in Mohegan Lake**, contributing direct donations (excluding Souper Bowl) of \$204 in the last quarter of 2019 and \$3,520 in the first 8 months of 2020. Grace has participated in the Souper Bowl of Caring for more than 20 years. Our 2020 effort was a great success in the



effort to "Tackle Hunger". 625 cans of soup were donated by Grace members and our Boy Scout Troop 174! Our members and visitors also made monetary donations in large soup pots labeled for the SF 49ers and the KC Chiefs and sampled delicious homemade soups in our fellowship hall after each worship service, resulting in \$635 in contributions. Thank you to our soup makers: Lori Gilmore, Kim Iamiceli, Georgette Muller and Bob Wilson, and to Heidi Bornemann for again assembling our “football field” and counting / boxing all the cans!

Art Shroder continues to serve on the CFP board, and he coordinated the collection of special food donations for 2019 Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners. As soon as Art was able to return home after his extended hospital and rehabilitation stays, he returned to his regular routine of delivering food donations from area businesses such as Walmart and the German American Club in Putnam Valley. During the height of the pandemic, the pantry was serving about 400 families each Saturday, distributing pre-assembled bags via drive-up only. Currently they are serving about 200 families weekly by reservation and the pantry recipients can come inside the building to select their food items. The pre-Covid number of families served was typically about 100 families.



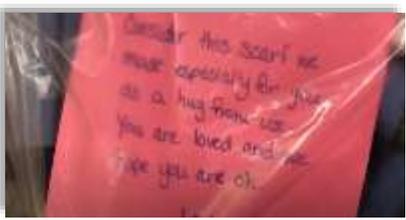
Twelve Grace members took part in a **Midnight Run** on a very chilly December 20, 2019. In addition to supplying the usual needs – warm clothing, new underwear, blankets, toiletries, lovingly prepared bag lunches and hot soup and coffee, we also provided the men with a thermal base layer undershirt and/or leggings. Additionally, we distributed red felt stockings which we'd packed with hand warmers, foot warmers, candy canes, and fair trade chocolate minibars along with good cheer, respect and compassion to the homeless poor. At one stop we had to share sidewalk space with a Christmas tree vendor, but the people we served were patient and appreciative of our visit. If you haven't already done so, I encourage you to view the video of that Run which was created by Lina Sciabbarasi.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yuhZOy1tf1M&feature=youtu.be>

We were pleased to be able to resume our Midnight Run participation on September 25, 2020 albeit in a different manner employing masks and distancing, and limiting what we distributed, how we distributed it, and how many volunteers could travel to NYC. Our human exchange of compassion, rather than the exchange of goods, is the essence of the Midnight Run mission. We hope to do another Run in December 2020.

Gift cards and presents donated to the **Angel Tree** made Christmas brighter for several local families who were



being served by Community Cares and dealing with the critical illness of either a parent or a child. Not all the gift requests were for children – some were for the parents. When a family's time and resources are spent fighting an illness, there is often no money left over to purchase even the basics.

Your purchases of **Fair Trade coffee, tea, hot cocoa, chocolate, olive oil and nuts** provide a living wage for farmers and their families, and encourage environmentally responsible practices in their communities. In conjunction with our Craft Fair on November 9th, Social Ministry displayed **SERRV Fair Trade Handcrafts** and sold \$750 worth of consignment

and food items. We also made fair trade handcrafts available for sale after the Christmas Concert on December 15th. After the church building was shut down in mid-March, we identified and donated fair trade edibles that were past their "Best By" date to the Community Food Pantry. Most recently, we received permission to sell Fair Trade edibles at the Wednesday afternoon Farmers Market at the Jefferson Valley Mall on September 30th, October 28th and November 11th, helping us spread the message about supporting small scale farmers and cooperatives in our community. Stop by and say hello and make a purchase!

In cooperation with the Interfaith Council of Yorktown, Grace's Social Ministry team was proud to participate in promoting and co-hosting (along with Temple Beth Am and First Presbyterian Church) a series of three **Race and Faith workshops** in September, October and November 2019. We viewed the PBS series Race – the Power of an Illusion and took part in facilitated discussions about what we learned. At the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, the ELCA called on "all congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to engage in communal study of the structures and rhetoric that empower and fuel racism and white supremacy and to take to heart the teaching of Scriptures, so we may all be better equipped to speak boldly about the equal dignity of all persons in the eyes of God." An **Anti-Racism sub-committee** was recently formed at Grace and has been reviewing content from the ELCA resource "Troubling the Waters for the Healing of the Church" in anticipation of developing a congregational program on this topic.

In October 2019, Grace members donated \$1,301.75 to ELCA Disaster Response, which included \$201.75 raised from a Sunday School bake sale in response to Hurricane Dorian, which devastated the Bahamas.

Our planned **Bread for the World Offering of Letters Campaign for 2020** "Better Nutrition, Better Tomorrow" focused on global childhood nutrition programs during first 1,000 days and summer feeding programs in the US. This Advocacy activity was promoted as a virtual, individual letter writing campaign on Sunday April 26th and the form letters were distributed as part of the weekly Grace worship email.



We learned that the **42 Baby Care Kits** assembled on Easter Sunday in 2019 for **Lutheran World Relief** were shipped in December 2019 for distribution to mothers in South Sudan. In South Sudan, where a severe food crisis fueled by severe drought and deadly civil war has left the country on the brink of famine, Lutheran World Relief is providing critical aid to families, and especially infants and young children by supporting emergency treatment centers in extremely poor areas of the country where there are no other medical facilities.

Our Lenten collection of supplies for **LWR Personal Care Kits** was interrupted by the closure of our church building in March. We are waiting to hear from LWR when they can schedule a truck pickup so that we can again serve as

an Ingathering site for other congregations in our Synod.



**Lutheran
World
Relief**

Once we have that date, we will ask you to resume donating the needed supplies so that we can assemble the Kits. Your monetary donations will help us purchase what is still missing.

Georgette Muller continued her **Prayer Shawl ministry**, distributing shawls to several members of Grace during the shutdown. We plan to host a virtual workshop in the near future to encourage other members of Grace to learn how to knit or crochet prayer shawls.

Lutherans have a long history (starting with Martin Luther) of supporting literacy. After Covid-19 restrictions are lifted, our Social Ministry team plans to explore with local libraries what and where the needs are for a literacy program in our area.

Lastly, we are excited to announce that the **Yorktown Community Garden of Hope**, sponsored by the Yorktown Interfaith Council, will be relocated in 2021 to Willow Park, which is located just 6/10 mile south of Grace on Curry Street. As the closest church to the Garden, we will be seeking Grace volunteers to have a visible presence and participate in the operation of the Garden. To begin, the Garden team will need to prepare the new site, erect deer fencing and till the ground. All produce grown in the Garden will be donated to Yorktown food pantries. Please contact Chuck or Leslie Rogler if you are interested in volunteering at the Garden next year.

As you can see, there are many opportunities to serve in these ministries, and we appreciate your support and participation!



Grace Green Team

Sarah Wilson

The Green Team was proud to sponsor a “zero-waste” Craft Fair in November 2019 through the use of fully commercially compostable service ware, and the hiring of a firm to pick up all of the compostable waste. Our next zero waste project will be to construct our own composting collection center which we can utilize for events.



The Green Team continued to sponsor film events for the congregation in Q4 2019 and YTD 2020. On Sunday, January 26, February 9 and February 23, the Green Team screened 30-minute segments of **Racing Extinction** in the Fellowship Hall followed by short guided discussions. Racing Extinction is an eco-thriller that examines mankind's role in mass extinctions. On April 26, we screened **The Human Element** virtually, followed by a discussion via Webex. On September 27, we viewed **Tossed Out – Food Waste in America**, again followed by a discussion via Webex.



Our **Repair Cafes** continued with events on the last Saturdays in October 2019 and January 2020. Our April and July 2020 events were cancelled due to Covid-19, but we pivoted to an outdoor model for our October 24, 2020 event in the Grace parking lot, and we are encouraged by the volunteers who have again agreed to support this event with their time and repair talents.



Craft Fair

Sarah Wilson

This event provides a wonderful opportunity for a broad section of our members and friends to come together for these common purposes:

• **Fun and fellowship for the members of Grace.** This is a great way to team up with and get to know members of our Grace family. It really is good Christian fun!

Thank you to everyone who organized Craft workshops at church, and to everyone who worked on crafts from home. We had a wonderful selection of items for sale! Our Country Kitchen sold out of all of their baked goods, and the volunteers were busy. The chili made by Vinny Tipa and the Men's Group was delicious and the fruit cups sold especially well when marketed by Pastor Chris! Georgette, John and John's



brother spent the week before the event pricing, cleaning, and setting up displays for the Tag Sale. Janet Klammer did her usual amazing job at the event, as well as disposing of the leftover items afterward.

• **Continue the tradition of holding a well-run and well-attended Grace Church Craft Fair.** We know that over 300 people attended, because we gave out the 300th ribbon cross by 3PM. The ribbon crosses were a popular item, and people were pleasantly surprised and appreciative to learn they were being given an item for free. All of our volunteers were



friendly and enthusiastic. So many of our visitors commented on how they look forward to this event and they shared their memories of Grace over the years with us. They seemed to be pleased with the merchandise and the atmosphere. The gift baskets are always very popular, and it was obvious how much care and effort went into their preparation.

• **Invite and welcome the community to visit our facility and get to know us as neighbors.** The room looked beautiful, especially the table coverings and the gift basket display. The greeters did a great job both welcoming and thanking those exiting. People appreciate that. We also had a video loop playing which provided further information about Grace.

• **Raise funds to support the mission of Grace.** Our 2019 Craft Fair raised \$7,000 after expenses, which was AMAZING! The committee decided to contribute \$2,000 divided equally between Lutheran Disaster Response, Community Cares, Community Food Pantry in Mohegan Lake and Putnam / Northern Westchester Women's Resource Center. In addition, \$500 was designated to our KEMPS Student Scholarship fund and \$250 to the Etched Glass fund in memory of Gary Bauerlein. The balance of funds (\$4,250) were marked for transfer into the Grace Capital fund, to upgrade our physical facilities and grounds, with the intention that they be used towards the purchases of:

- 1) 8 black 6 foot tables (which were used at the Craft Fair) for \$400.
15 new 60" round tables at \$133 / each with a rack for \$2,000.
- 2) Four new seasonal welcome banners to be installed outside for Palm Sunday, Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas – price TBD
- 3) Two new trash cans for kitchen to replace red ones, 1 new recycling can for kitchen to replace green bins for \$270
- 4) Fan for choir loft to make it more comfortable in hot weather – price TBD
- 5) Installation of a
2nd Grace
Lutheran Church
sign at driveway
entrance – price
TBD



After the event, Diane Travis delivered the remaining gift baskets to the P/NW Women's Resource Shelter in Mahopac for them to provide to the women and families they serve.

The 2019 Craft Fair committee proposed Saturday, November 20, 2021 as a potential date for our next



event. Although it is a year away, **it is not too soon to start the planning!** A small 2021 Craft Fair steering committee

The steering committee needs to be formed soon. The steering committee will invite volunteers to sign up for the various tasks and activities that are required to make the event successful. They check in with those volunteers to make sure they understand what is expected of them. They ensure that each area is staffed appropriately the day of the event, as well as for the many required tasks leading up to the event. Please send an email to Office@graceyorktown.org if you would like to volunteer to serve on the Craft Fair Steering Committee for 2021!



Fellowship Committee

Georgette Muller

The year started out with great promise. In addition to our usual activities we were planning on restarting Grace Campers in August and a big Adults Only Halloween party on October 30th. The year was not a total loss as we held an informal cider and donuts after the 9:30 outdoor service on October 11th and tailgate Oktoberfest on Reformation Sunday complete with accordion music (courtesy of Richard Cruse) and beer, wine and soft drinks. Under the circumstances we thought it best that everyone supplied their own food. Since we do not know what next year will bring, we are always open to suggestions for socially distant ideas to keep our congregation connected in person.



Stewardship Committee

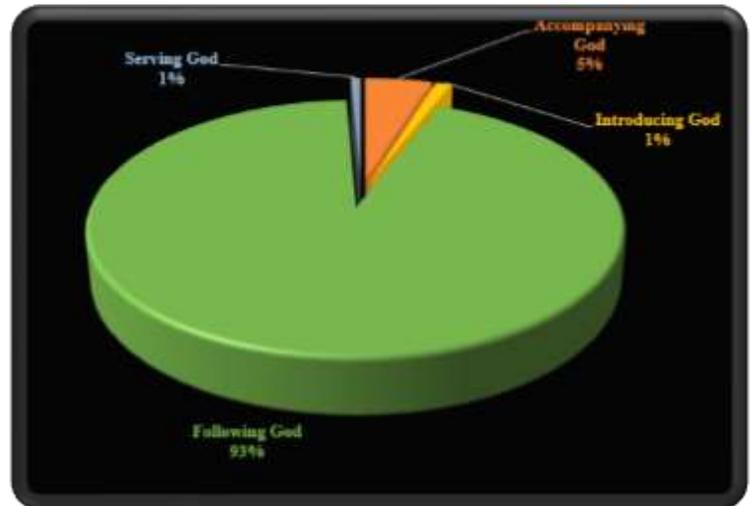
Kathy Slater

In 2019 the Stewardship Committee broke down our efforts into four distinct categories:

1. **Following God:** How do we express our faith and meet the challenges of daily life? Events that fall in this category are Worship Services, Ash Wednesday, Lent Services, Baptisms,

Funerals, 1st Communion, Widows Support Group, and Bible Studies.

2. **Introducing God:** How are we reaching people who are learning about or do not know the Good News? Events that fall in this category are Sunday School Class, Vacation Bible School, Acts of Kindness, 1st Communion Classes and Confirmation Classes.
3. **Serving God:** What are we doing so our neighbors know that God's love is for real? Events that fall in this category consist of Service Projects, Midnight Run, Breakfast Run, KEMPS.
4. **Accompanying God:** What are we doing so our neighbors know that God accompanies them on their life's journey? Events that fall under this category are Pastoral Care, Fellowship events, Repair Café, Fellowship Hall Rentals and Boy Scout meetings.



The Stewardship Committee continues to remain committed to making a difference in the daily lives of our Grace family and local community by sharing the love of God. This past year emphasized the importance of how the footprints we leave inspire our brothers and sisters to be faithful. As you can see in the chart below, due to the pandemic and the daily challenges of 2020 our focus has been on "Following God" to strengthen our faith. Due to the social restrictions we have faced this has mostly been accomplished by attending worship services and bible studies.

While 2020 has made us focus on one parameter of our mission, the Stewardship Committee remains committed

to growing our other three sectors when it is safe and appropriate to do so. By ensuring our faith is strong and trusting in God it will help us expand our branches when we enter the “new” normal.



Finance Committee

Jeffrey Kellogg

We have a small but dedicated membership. I want to thank Sarah Wilson, Kathy Slater, Art Schroder, Nancy Eichorn, Kathleen Coleman Kelly and Pastor Chris for all their dedication and hard work. I will also take this opportunity to ask for new membership. Please join us!

I will start this report with my general observation of the financial response, during covid, to what could have been devastating for the Grace budget and Grace’s ability to function “normally”. Simply put, our Grace family has responded with strength and generosity. We thank everyone for all you have done to keep Grace strong and to help get us through to the other side of this awful pandemic. I encourage us all to keep up the good work!

Here are a few highlights of what the committee has been doing this year:

** We now meet once every month (virtually at 7:30am) with the thought that we can follow the financial trends more closely. Pastor Chris updates his trend slides monthly which makes it very easy to follow.

** We held two separate internal audit meetings to complete our audits for 2018 and 2019.

** We have identified two new subcommittees to develop a more comprehensive strategy for our investments and to develop a Grace Foundation to further enhance our ability to receive “planned/estate gifts”.

** A “PPP” loan/grant was successfully applied for and received.

** A proposed/recommended 2021 budget was sent to Council.

If you would like to join our committee please email me at jklog2@hotmail.com.



Worship & Music Committee

Linda Kiederer

Grace’s W&M Committee is led by Pastor Chris and Becki Advocate. Co-chairs Carol Swanson and Linda Kiederer typically assist Pastor Chris with an

agenda, ideas, and minutes. We have dedicated groups who provide Grace with worship assistants (Deacon Carol Straub) and altar guild duties (Carol Hoover and Nancy Eichorn). Pastor Chris meets separately with each of them and Becki to plan our seasons ahead. Nedra Thomas, Flo Nangendo and Charlie Kiederer are our spiritual assistants! This has been a challenging year and through it all each of us has done our part to assist Pastor Chris and provide a welcoming and spiritual place at the corner of Curry and Gomer.

Much planning was accomplished at our September and November meetings as we followed the Liturgical Calendar continuing through Christmas. These were busy times, including an invitation to the congregation to attend the 3-part Race and Faith program with our faith partners. Our services included Bluegrass music, a Christmas Concert, changing to Continuous Communion from Advent 4 (until Ash Wednesday), and always looking ahead!

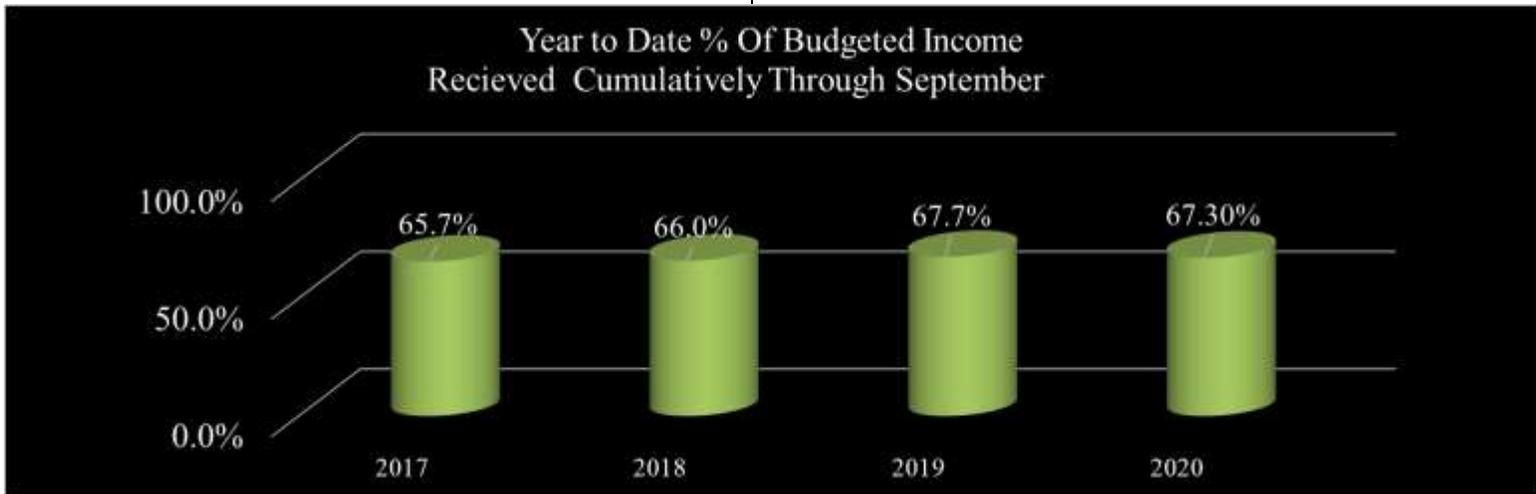
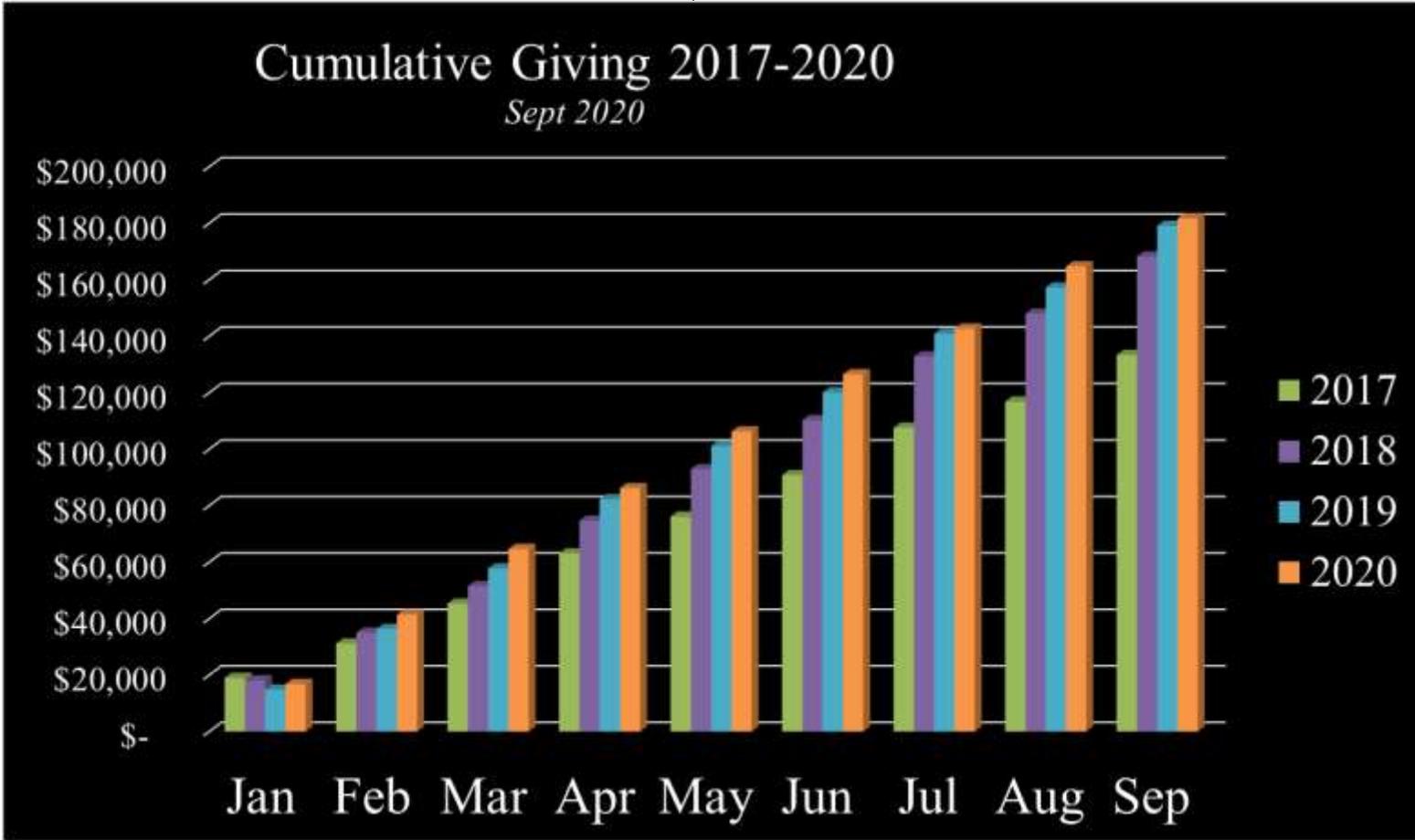
Our January meeting centered on pre-planning for the Lenten season and Easter, with a follow-up meeting scheduled for March 24th. Ash Wednesday and the first Taize service was accomplished at Church and in person on March 4, with the final in person Sunday services on March 8...then Covid 19 struck! As we began to understand the situation, Pastor Chris worked diligently to navigate a new normal form of virtual worship and study. New talents were enlisted to bring our beautiful Holy Week services into our homes with Pastor Chris ever cognizant of safety. In May we met again virtually to set the first guidelines of what “church” would look like when we could return to in person worship. Our new focus was a return to normal following lockdown. “One Step at a Time”.

By our June meeting Grace was offering various forms of worship, thanks to Pastor Chris and his first-rate team of Samantha DeGraffenried, Doug Jenkins, Carol Hoover and Carl Gebauer. Becki continued to plan our music and has tried pre-recording choir and solo singing that could be added to the worship experience. We met again in August and September to review what has worked and what could be improved on. Physical attendance has grown steadily and so far, the 9:30 outside service has been the most popular. Pastor has single handedly led all decisions on how to proceed with our safety in mind. Thanks to his expertise in technology, and with great help from Doug and Samantha, our live streaming, Webex and YouTube presence for worship and meetings has been outstanding! Worship averages 376 people per week! We are now planning Reformation through

Thanksgiving. We will return to 2 services when it is too cold to worship outside.



Graphs @ Great Giving!





Sunday, Nov. 8th at 12:00 p.m.

Grace's Council will host a virtual "Town Hall" styled meeting to provide an opportunity for all members of Grace to hear more details about the Annual Report and Budget, ask ques-

tions, submit ideas and share accolades or concerns. The Town Hall will be live-streamed on Grace's Facebook Private/Public Page and Grace's YouTube Channel, as well as broadcast via Webex. Links for all of these meetings can be found in an email that will be sent to you closer to the event.



Sunday, Nov. 15th @ Noon

Grace will hold our Virtual Annual Meeting online at noon. The meeting will be broadcast on Grace's Facebook Private/Public Pages, Grace's YouTube Channel, as well as being live as a Video Conference on Webex. Links for all of these

viewing options will be sent to everyone in an email closer to the event. The agenda will include a final presentation and voting on the proposed 2021 Budget, a vote on calling Doug Jenkins as a Congregational Deacon, a vote on reinstating Grace's three other congregational deacons to active call, a vote on the proposal for repair and sealing of the parking lot. Votes will be cast via email during the event. Details on how to vote will be provided in an email closer to the event.