

**Grace Church
Ministry Reports for Annual Meeting
October 9, 2016**

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Lead Pastor's Report
By Rev. Don Cummings

I am happy to report that ministry in and through Grace Church continues to thrive. One key indicator of a congregation's health is worship attendance. It is a barometer of both faithfulness on the part of regular worshipers, and effectiveness in attracting and holding newcomers. Our attendance continues to hold steady and we regularly see new people coming into the fellowship of Grace Church.

Small groups are another indicator of a congregation's spiritual health. A rule of thumb is that a congregation needs one small group for every ten people in worship. With an average attendance of around sixty, we need at least six small groups to serve the fellowship, study, and outreach needs of the congregation. We have:

- Ladies Sewing Group
- Angels of Grace Prayer Shawl Ministry
- Women's Bible Study
- Men's Book Study
- Men's Bible Study
- Family Faith Builders
- Choir
- Altar Guild
- Grace Outlaws ATV Group
- Grief Recovery Group
- Spiritual Discovery Group
- Multiple opportunities to be involved in outreach and missions

A spirit of hospitality is as important to a congregation's health as anything. Our fellowship time following worship, informal gatherings, the annual church picnic, and shared meals all offer an open and accepting environment designed to help newcomers feel welcome and at home.

Caregiving is a major part of the relational glue that holds a congregation together. Pastoral care is given by our pastors, but just as important is the care our members give to each other. Prayers, visits, calls, encouragement and food are among the many ways we express care to one another.

These are strengths of longstanding and they will continue to serve us well as we journey into a future that will be shaped in part by a transition in pastoral leadership.

Co-Pastor's Report
By Rev. Catherine Tran

As Episcopal Co-Pastor at Grace, my activities on behalf of the parish in 2016 include:

Two Sunday services each month
Extra services during Lent and Christmas
Pastoral Care Visiting
Council meetings
Spiritual Discovery Group
Fellowship events, events with parishioners
Email correspondence
Monthly Newsletter Article
Acolyte training
Working with the Altar Guild

Other clergy activities over the past year include growing my practice in spiritual direction, regular attendance at my wellness/supervision group, attending clergy conference, and supply work.

2017 will be a year that presents Grace with unique opportunities. The clergy transitions that will take place will require the best of us. Don will be our leader until the end of June, and we will continue to rely on him for his wisdom and guidance, but lay leaders may need to take on more as Don begins to put down the responsibilities of Lead Pastor. I will certainly be available to you and will be glad to share my opinions as I always have, but I am aware that Don is still “the boss” until the end of June. I will be careful about not overstepping my bounds as Co-Pastor. Of course, after June, I will be all in as your new Rector (that's Episcopalian for Lead Pastor)!

It is a joy to part of the Grace Church Family!

Grace Council Chairman's Report **By Peggy Finkowski, Chairman**

It has been an honor to serve as the 2016 Council Chair at Grace Church. I appreciate the generous contributions of time, talents and knowledge from the clergy and our council members. Council members are Vice – Chair, Bob Yinger, Carol Slater – secretary (who takes detailed notes, with shorthand!), Jeff Deardorff, Junia Fitzgerald, Celso Harper, Nancy Rem, Danny Simpson, Judy Edmands; clergy – Don Cummings and Catherine Tran, Ex-officio council member – Annette Dickinson (church administrator & treasurer). I want to thank Annette Dickinson for her detailed financial reports. I want to specifically acknowledge Annette's dedicated contributions during our busy year. She answered numerous questions about the budget and expertly executed the added work related to the workshops and meetings concerning the budget.

Highlights from the 2015/2016 Council year include –

- Balanced our budget.
- The Council approved the purchase of an automated external defibrillator (AED) and several members attended an AED training.
- The Council approved moving our savings account to Collegiate Peaks Bank for local service & a better interest rate.
- In the spring we hosted a work session for the congregation, in order to receive input on the budget. About 20 people were in attendance.
- In June we hosted a work session for the council. Catherine recommended the facilitator, Rev. Chris Johnson, to help us discern our budget.
- A new picture directory was distributed this summer. Our thanks to Don Cummings for taking the portraits and his committee for the candid photo pages included in the directory.

The Council notes the retirement of Bonnie Young after many years of dedicated service to Grace Church as the Chair of Congregational Life. She was an integral part in the development of Grace Church. We appreciate her contributions over the years.

New for 2017 - Cash received on the last Sunday collection plate will be donated to the Outreach committee for their distribution. Also, when Outreach promotes a special giving opportunity – the checks donated on behalf of the organization should be written out ***directly to*** the external organization (such as Nothing but Nets, Buena Vista Pregnancy Center, Sweet Dreams Colorado, etc.)

Those ending their term of service on the Council in December will be Jeff Deardorff, Danny Simpson & Judy Edmands. Thank you for your dedication in serving on the Grace Council.

Building and Grounds Committee
By Celso Harper

The Building and Grounds committee has had a relative quite year thus far. Gabi Lane has been working in the Garden of Grace and the surrounding flower beds. In my opinion, the Garden has had a transformation for the better and will continue to need maintenance from Gabi for some time. I want to thank David Lehmann for blowing out the sprinkler system last fall. Also this past spring Jim Finkowski started up the sprinkler system for the season. Without these two gentlemen our lawn certainly would not have looked as well for the summer. I thank Henry Eisenhand for making some minor electrical repairs in the Annex and he will install new GFI outlets in the near future. I am thankful to Max Robertson for assisting me in tree trimming at the beginning of my term of service.

During this past winter the committee used a deicer product for the first time. The product is relative inexpensive and environmentally safe making the walkways and porches safer by melting snow/ice accumulation. Used by many states in the country to help clear highway bridges, the committee was pleased with the product and should continue to use it as needed.

Several items will be considered by the church council to continue the maintenance and make improvements to our wonderful historical church building and grounds. Some items include: refinish wood floors and install new carpet in the sanctuary; replace windows and wood trim; improve lighting behind parish hall and the church sign in front of the church; new chairs in parish hall; additional handrail on parish hall ramp; seal and re-stripe parking lot; repaint ramps and replace skid pads. I look forward to their recommendations.

This report is my last official act as chairman of the B & G committee. I have enjoyed serving as the chairman and I appreciate the opportunity to have served Grace Church in this way. Thanks to all who have supported me during my Chairmanship and I look forward to the future of Grace Church.

Congregational Life

By Bonnie Young

Congregational Life is a vibrant and active part of Grace Church. It was active this past year in ongoing activities as well as new adventures. Bonnie Young, past chair, retired and Judy Epperson accepted the chair of Congregational Life.

Sunday Worship – Carolyn Hayes and Bill Fitzgerald assign the Sunday Worship Teams including greeters and readers and clergy assistants. Information is posted on the Grace Church Website. Judy Epperson coordinates with the clergy, music director and worship team to prepare the weekly Sunday bulletins.

Membership Directory – In May, Grace Church published a picture directory in a notebook with removable pages. It is a complete list of friends and members with a picture and full information like addresses, phone numbers and e-mails. Don Cummings took pictures of members throughout the summer and fall. Some members requested different locations and with family pets. A large committee assisted in the organization, planning and publishing of the directory. Because the directory is in a notebook, additional pages can be added that will reflect the changes. A written directory will still be published periodically.

Picture Bulletin Board – Pictures from the picture directory will be replacing the existing pictures on the Grace Picture Board.

Flowers on the altar-- Throughout the year, members sign up to donate the flowers on the altar. Members are informed of the times in the liturgical calendar when flowers are not displayed. At special times in the year, members were invited to donate money for Lilies at Easter and Poinsettias at Christmas. Dedications and contributions were listed in the bulletin.

Wednesday night Lent services followed with soup and bread are coordinated with the Congregational United Church of Christ (CUCC) for the 6 weeks of Lent. Maryanne Freed and Dorothy Miller organized the three soup-n-bread dinners at Grace following Lenten service and worked with the CUCC who hosted the other three Lenten services and dinners.

Annual Meeting in October 2015-- The Council paid for the brisket and the congregation members provided the side dishes.

Women's Annual Advent Brunch was held in December. The theme was "Angels Among Us." The speaker was Lida Dahlberg from Silver Creek Resort. Evelyn Baker acted as the Mistress of Ceremony. The Women of Grace provided the musical entertainment including a sing-a-long accompanied by Junia Fitzgerald. The men of Grace acted as hosts and servers. Women of Grace and friends enjoyed a meal catered by Mary Lou Pentasoglio. Guests received angel lapel pins and an angel ornament.

Christmas Eve Services - Two services were scheduled. The service at 5 pm was family-oriented. Don Cummings and Catherine Tran conducted the service. At 7 pm Lessons and Carols was scheduled. Congregation members read the lessons and the congregation sang carols.

Jewish Seder and Hanukkah - Grace members were invited to attend these two Jewish holidays under the leadership of Bob Freed. Members made the traditional Jewish meals and participated in the Jewish programs. Council provided the brisket. Don Cummings and Catherine Tran linked the two Jewish holidays to the beliefs of the Christian faith.

Grace Church once again opened its doors for the Fourth of July. The Grace Choir under the direction of Betty Dethmers, presented two patriotic concerts in the church. The Loose Threads Sewing Group had the Quilts of Valor on display. Over the years, they have completed and shipped over 225 quilts to wounded soldiers and veterans. Grace also opened the Parish Hall during the day so that those in the community watching the parade and participating in the other events in Buena Vista could come into the Parish Hall to use the facilities and have some cookies and punch.

Grace Church's Annual Summer Picnic was held in September at the Mini Blessing Farm. Grace Church provided the burgers and brats and members brought side dishes to share. It was a fun time to sit and talk and enjoy the surroundings.

Family Faith Builders **By Judy Ezell**

Family Faith Builders is beginning its fifth year. It started as a venue for youth and their families to learn more about the church, Jesus, and Christianity with adult mentors. We met monthly at first, then bi-monthly, and this year we will meet weekly. During the summer months outings are planned as a way to keep in touch and enjoy fellowship and fun together. This ministry to youth has become a resounding success due to the deep commitment from each member.

Our sessions include study, fellowship, and food. The goal is to come to a better understanding of God's plan for our lives and to support each other in this endeavor. The parents involved with this ministry have already begun the transition to a different leadership model in anticipation of Rev. Cummings' re-retirement next June. Expanding to a weekly schedule with the Family Faith Builders Team in charge of the program for the weeks when Rev. Cummings is not present is part of this new model. Family Faith Builders has been one of Grace's greatest unsung successes. It is a healthy group with strong potential for the future.

Finance Committee
By Brenda Harper

In addition to the weekly responsibilities of counting, depositing and recording the donor contributions and signing checks related to church operations, the Finance Committee met several times this year to review and approve various items, such as:

- changing budget procedures with recommendations to the Council;
- performing the internal audit of the Church's financial records for 2015;
- renewing a CD at Colorado East for two years for a higher rate of return;
- beginning work on a new Endowment Fund document; and
- reviewing the 2017 Operating Budget draft, which was approved by Council at the October 1, 2016 meeting pending the outcome of this year's Stewardship Campaign.

Ed Butler's term on the Committee officially ends at the end of 2016. Jo Rodeheffer, Becky Arthur and Brenda Harper will remain on the Committee for 2017.

Annette Dickinson, Treasurer, is an ex-officio member of this Committee and has no term limit.

Grace Notes Newsletter
By Judy Epperson

Eleven issues of Grace Notes were published in 2016. The August issue was missed because my computer died and I was without it for a month.

I would like to thank everyone who submitted articles, particularly Peggy Finkowski, Brenda Nesbitt, Don Cummings and Catherine Tran who faithfully sent articles every month. I know it takes time and effort to put out a monthly column and I greatly appreciate your contributions.

I would also like to thank the congregation of Grace Church who continues to support me in this endeavor. It's great to be appreciated. I am looking forward to another successful year.

The Loose Threads: Ladies' Sewing Group
By Judy Butler

From September 2015 through September 2016 the Loose Threads have had two craft/baked goods sales and one mini-sale. Our sale for Christmas 2015 was a huge success, with thanks not only to the sewing group but to all who contributed baked goods to our sale. As a result of that huge effort, we were proudly able to donate \$2,700.00 to the Chaffee County Search and Rescue. Our second sale, held on the 4th of July enabled us to give \$500.00 to the Pregnancy Center in Buena Vista and \$500.00 to HOPE, a group in Buena Vista who educates middle school children regarding human trafficking. These are two local charities that Grace Church Outreach has been unable to support this year to the degree they have in other years. Our mini-sale provided funds to help pay for supplies for our projects. We have made small donations of goods over the year and have accepted many donations of fabrics and other items. We are most appreciative of the generosity of the community. With limited resources, we still hope to raise funds for our Outreach Program.

Men's Bible Study Group
By Jeff Deardorff

Led by Rev. Cummings, the Men's Bible Study Group meets on Tuesdays following the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month. This past year we continued our study of the Old Testament and the history of the Israelites - the roots of our Judeo-Christian beliefs, values, and faith – and recently completed the book of Genesis. Last year the Men's Bible Study Group hosted the *Pikes Peak Youth Ringers* in conjunction with its "annual cookout" in the Parish Hall. This coming year, with a brief "intermission," in which we will view and discuss the documentary movie *Patterns of Evidence*, we will continue our study of the "Pentateuch" focusing on Exodus. Also this year it is the group's intent to start meeting weekly swapping out lay-leadership on alternating weeks.

Depending on the time of year, approximately 6 to 10 men meet at the Parish Hall to read, discuss and gain insight to Scripture using study guides provided by Grace Church. The lively discussions and "rabbit holes" we sometimes go down are fascinating, and we have lots of room for new members seeking a better understanding of the Word of God, Spiritual growth, and joyous Christian fellowship.

Music Ministry Report
By Ed Butler

The Grace Choir under the direction of Betty Dethmers continued the tradition of performing a Patriotic Concert on July 4. The house was again packed for their two performances.

The choir performed at most worship services from June – September under directors Betty Dethmers and Jennifer Scoggin.

Solo performances by Grace members have been featured throughout the year. Those contributing to the worship experience include Becky Arthur, Judy Epperson, Mary Hallman Lee, and Sherry Thomas.

Junia Fitzgerald, Betty Dethmers, and Jennifer Scoggin have provided organ/piano music for worship in relief of Ed Butler.

The Chime Time program for elementary students completed its spring semester with performances at Grace Church, Valley Fellowship Church, and Darren Patterson Christian Academy. The program will continue beginning in September 2016 with Grace Church providing the chimes, the practice venue, and adult supervision. Financial support for the directors Randy and Carol Barnes will come from another source.

Outreach Committee

The practice of the Outreach Committee is to support local non-profit organizations and causes first and then to screen other worthwhile projects that are brought to our attention. The Committee separates the organizations/causes into two groups – the Monthly Projects and the Budgeted Projects. The Monthly Projects are those 12 projects that are announced to you throughout the year so as to give you an opportunity to support these with either in-kind contributions or a monetary donation. The Monthly Projects are not funded by the Outreach budget, rather the Budgeted Projects are the ones funded by the monies allocated to Outreach in the budget. The Outreach Committee consists of: Tom Clark – Chair, Martha Bauman, Judy Epperson, Peggy Finkowski and Brenda Nesbitt.

BUDGETED PROJECT DISBURSEMENTS (9/1/15-8/31/16)

This report reflects the transition in the reporting period from a calendar year period to the 12 month period starting September 1st. As a result, the reported disbursements during this period are rather low, for two reasons -

- the majority of the 2015 disbursements were made before 9/1/15
- the majority of the 2016 disbursements have or will be made after 8/31/16 due to the reduction in the Outreach funding in order to balance the budget.

This will all straighten out with the next reporting period of 9/1/16-8/31/17.

The listing that follows are the projects funded during this reporting period. In addition, 3 remaining projects will be funded before year-end and 3 already funded projects will receive additional funds.

	<u>Budgeted Contribution</u>	<u>Additional Designated Contributions</u>
Arkansas Valley Christian Mission	\$800	\$1,029*
St. George Community Meal Program	\$800	\$655*
Mini-Blessings	\$650	
Alas de Amor Student Sponsorship	\$410	
Missionary Support – Jecka Walker/Navigators-CSU	\$400	
Alliance Against Domestic Abuse	\$400	
Ladies Sewing Group	\$370	
Monthly Outreach Project expenses	\$274	
Chaffee County Habitat for Humanity	\$200	
Chaffee County Fire Protection	\$200	
Boys and Girls Club of Chaffee County	\$150	
Prayer Shawl Ministry	\$21	\$10
Disaster Relief – Louisiana Flood Relief	\$ Paid in Sept	\$526
General Miscellaneous		<u>\$849**</u>
Total	<u>\$4,675</u>	\$3,069

*represents Month-End Collections for local missions

**represents \$ received from Garage Sale proceeds

MONTHLY PROJECTS (9/1/15-8/31/16)

2015

September - BVPC Walk

15 registered participants raised \$1,240

October - Operation Christmas Child

18 boxes collected, Miscellaneous Outreach fund paid \$126 postage

November - Prayers for Prisoners Card Writing

300 cards mailed, \$190 Member Designated Funds collected for postage

December - AVCM (kids' gifts for Dads)

26 items collected – socks, watches, billfolds, flashlights, razors, shaving cream, gloves

2016

January - St Francis Center

235 pair tube socks including Outreach purchases of \$100 Member Designated Funds

February - BVPC

Baby Bottle Campaign

35 Items collected (estimated value \$150)

March - Nothing but Nets

\$365 (\$10/net) of Member Designated Funds

April - Sweet Dreams Colorado

34 pairs of pjs including Outreach purchases of \$50 of Member Designated Funds

May - AVCM Backpack drive

13 backpacks purchased with \$160 of Member Designated Funds

June - Quilts of Valor

16 quilts made by Loose Threads and sponsored by \$1,074 in Member Designated Funds

July - Habitat Meal

Meals for 2 dozen

August - St. Joseph's Indian School

Collection for St. Joseph Indian School in Aug.

38 doz. colored pencils

9 folders

6 pkgs. markers

100 pencils

2 pkgs. white board markers

assorted pens, mechanical pencils

3 Walmart gift cards totaling \$70

Staff/Parish Relations Committee
By Jeff Deardorff

The Staff/Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) is responsible for supporting and maintaining harmony with Grace’s clergy and staff, responding to the needs and issues identified by our clergy, and helping develop job descriptions for all employees. It confers with the Methodist District Superintendent (DS) on matters related to our Methodist pastor, and conducts his/her annual evaluation. This Committee also assists in the performance of Mutual Ministry Reviews in which our Episcopal clergy and the congregation are evaluated for ministry effectiveness.

Last year Council formally approved the Policies and Procedures for the SPRC. While required by our Methodist polity, SPRC has no counterpart in our Episcopal polity. Nonetheless Catherine, under circumstances unique to Grace Church, felt the SPRC’s role and responsibilities should be inclusive of both pastors. So SPRC works with both of our clergy to fulfill its responsibilities.

With Rev. Cummings’ recent announcement of his intent to “re-retire” in June of 2017, the SPRC has gone about the process of helping select another Methodist pastor for Grace Church. After meetings with Margaret Gillikin, our Methodist District Superintendent, and gaining insight from Lou Blanchard, Canon Missioner of our Episcopal Diocese, as well as soliciting and taking into account the feedback from members who felt compelled share their thoughts and opinions on this issue, the SPRC met several times to deliberate and develop its recommendations to Council.

At the July 3rd meeting, Council voted to accept the recommendation of the SPRC to hire Reverend Tran as our Lead Pastor effective July 1, 2017. Council also directed SPRC to

1. Begin contract negotiations with Rev. Tran;
2. Assist our clergy in developing a “transition plan” as we approach June of 2017;
and
3. Develop a position description for a new Methodist Co-pastor in order to begin the Co-pastor search process.

The congregation’s input and support for these processes are encouraged, and the SPRC welcomes members to confidentially share their thoughts and opinions with any SPRC member. Those members are Junia Fitzgerald, Danny Simpson, Margaret Butler, Janet Yinger and myself.

Summer Adult Choir
By Betty Dethmers

Grace Church Choir had 13 members, plus 2 guest basses, and sang the two July 4th Patriotic concerts. We will be able to purchase some new music for our next summer season with the donations we received. I had the choir sing for six Sundays this summer, and then Jennifer Scoggin stepped in to continue Sunday service music through the end of September.

Website: gracechurchbvco.org
By Annette Dickinson

Our new online Master Calendar was introduced last December. If you haven't had a chance to check it out, please take a look at our current monthly calendar at: <http://gracechurchbvco.org/events>. Simply click on an Event to see the details of that event. The next five upcoming events are shown on the right-hand side of every page of our website.

The calendar is also used to reserve our facilities for meetings and other events. Please be sure to submit your meeting requests to me so that we can be sure the facilities are available at the time you desire. We have a lot of on-going events for which our facilities are used, and some of them are used by outside parties.

Methodist and Episcopal Worship Team assignments are shown for each Sunday with details showing each assignment as follows:

- Chalice Minister/Server
- Crucifer
- Greeter #1
- Greeter #2
- Reader, including Prayers for the People, if applicable
- Torch Bearer #1
- Torch Bearer #2/Altar Asst.

Bill Fitzgerald is in charge of assigning the Episcopal Worship teams, while Carolyn Hayes coordinates the Methodist Worship teams and the Greeters. Once the worship teams for the month are determined, they are set up as Events each Sunday on our website Calendar. Altar Flower dedications and Fellowship Hour sign-ups are still done via paper copies located on the Parish Hall bulletin board.

It is my understanding that some of our members find the Calendar a bit too complicated. I'll be working on eliminating some of the information currently displayed on there that is not used and making the application easier to navigate through. I would appreciate receiving any feedback on how to make the application simpler.

Women's Bible Study

By Sharon Robertson

The Women's Bible Study meets on Mondays (except for the first Monday of the month) at 9:30 am in the Parish Hall. Currently we have between 15 & 18 who attend. The growth in Bible study, prayer & spiritual formation makes this a group for all women who are eager to grow in the Spirit of God's LOVE & Grace!

This year we have had great Bible studies including:

- A survey of the Hebrew Scriptures, better known as the Old Testament.
- We used the curriculum from Cokesbury Companions in Christ - a study that helps us use scripture, prayer & practices of spiritual formation.
- The Book of Revelation
- A study of Luke/Acts
- A book entitled What Every Christian Needs to Know About the Jewishness of Jesus - The book is written by a Jewish Rabbi & gives insight into the teachings of Jesus as a Jew & how his message was easily understood by the Jews at his time, especially his disciples. The author reminds us that Jesus "didn't start Christianity;" however, he helps us understand "the Jewish roots of Christianity." The author says, "When we learn, we grow." Our Bible study group did learn & grow!
- We are going to study the Book of Mark through the remainder of September & finish in October.
- Beginning in January 2017 we will again use Companions in Christ: The Way of Prayer. This study should take us through March.