

Grace Vine

Grace Lutheran Church, ELCA
1245 6th Ave. W., Hendersonville NC 28739
gracehendersonville.com / pr@gracehendersonville.com / 828-693-4890

February 2021

Strategic Vision: *Grace is a diverse community of faith serving Christ and sharing the love of God.*

Mission Statement: *We believe that God in Christ is central to all life and we WORSHIP him through TELLING his story, GROWING in faith, SUPPORTING each other, and CARING for his world.*

Purpose:
*Transforming
Lives
Through
Christ.*

Core Values:

- *Being a nurturing family of faith*
- *Growing faith in God the Father, Son & Holy Spirit*
- *Serving others with the heart of Jesus*
- *Seeking unity in Christ*
- *Embracing people seeking Christ*
- *Welcoming cross-cultural, Cross+Generational*

The Joy of Serving: Serving in Small Ways

Before writing this "Spotlight" article, I reread what I'd written last year at this time and realized again just how much had changed in this past year. The one thing that has not changed is Interfaith Assistance Ministry's commitment to helping those Henderson County residents facing financial crisis, job loss, illness, lost days of work and other hardships. In 2019, Interfaith served 13,000 individuals and families. In 2020, that number has doubled to over 26,000 souls served.

The 2021 drive will commence on Sunday, Feb. 21, which happens to be a Drive-Thru Communion Sunday. Food and clothing items will be collected near the Grace Lutheran activity bus which will be parked in the outer parking lot. In addition, donations will be accepted the rest of that week at the church, Monday, Feb. 22 through Friday Feb. 26, between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Because of the Covid pandemic, there have been several changes since last March, to include operating with a much reduced pool of volunteers, many of whom are older with compromised health issues, and needing to reduce the number of hours they are open to allow time to restock and stay ahead of the increased demand for food and other services. In addition, a Tuesday afternoon drive-thru outside the food pantry was implemented to meet the immediate needs of people who required food only - this in part this explains the greater need. Even with that increased need, Interfaith was still able to fill food orders so "holiday" meals were available to our neighbors in need.

It is with heartfelt thanks and gratitude that I emphasize the kindness and love shown to Interfaith through this particularly difficult time. Please consider, once again a donation, monetary or otherwise. Any donation is greatly appreciated by those in need.

~Claudia Northrup

IAM's Current Pantry and Clothing Needs

Canned Soup
Potatoes
Sweet Potatoes
Bags of Rice
Pasta Sauce
Canned Chicken and Tuna
Instant Oatmeal

Shampoo (no need for disposable bottles)
Paper Towels
Toilet Tissue
Plastic Grocery Bags
Queen Sheet Sets
Comforters and Blankets
Men's and Women's Socks

New Underwear of All Sizes
Long Sleeved Shirts for Boys and Girls
Pants for Boys and Girls
(0-24 mo) Clothing / Boys and Girls
Athletic Shoes
Men's Work Boots

Message from Senior Pastor Greg Williams

Pastor Greg Williams – gwilliams@gracehendersonville.com / 828-693-4890 x307

Vaccinations are Coming, Now What? ... Continued Patience & Vigilance

We all give thanks that vaccinations are being given for it stirs hope that an end may be coming into sight. Yes, "AN end" not necessarily "THE end" where we might return to our normal existence and ways of operating prior to the arrival of the novel coronavirus pandemic.



AN end meaning that we will be safer after getting our "jab" but we will not immediately be able to safely resume all activities and ministries at Grace - including worship - exactly as before the pandemic. Our Reopening Task Force (Amparo Acosta-Oviedo; Barry Pierce, Stephanie Winkel, Ken Ring, Bob Sebby, Tracy Pace, Greg Dodd, and Pastor Greg) continue discussing recommendations for Grace to safely begin to regather for in-person worship services and other ministries. The Congregation Council is responsible for approving whatever our safety protocols will be as we patiently prepare for gathering safely again.

The Reopening Task Force continues to proceed with patience and vigilance. Our utmost concern is to love our neighbor by following the recommendations from public health officials. To encourage your patience and understanding, here are protocols being recommended to Council:

1. The initial metric to allow regathering is that the positivity rate for CoVid tests in Henderson County is 5% or less for a rolling two-week average.
2. If the two-week average positivity rate for Henderson County exceeds 5%, in-person services will be immediately suspended until the average falls to 5% or less.
3. Only people who have received both vaccination shots and a minimum of two weeks have passed since the second shot will be eligible to return for worship or other gatherings at Grace according to the following parameters. A vaccination card will need to be shown prior to entry of the building during the outside check-in protocols.
4. Whenever in-person gatherings begin to resume, Grace will follow the protocols specified in our Phase Two recommendations approved by the Council in May 2020. (ie: masks, spacing, hand washing/sanitizer, limitation on numbers, no coffee/fellowship time, etc.)
5. Recognizing that religious organizations may choose to act differently, Grace will continue to follow NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) guidelines for indoor gathering limits.

Remember also that most of the staff and younger adult members are not eligible for a job until the last phase and the vaccine is not approved for children under 16 years old. We proceed with caution for their safety as well.

I am grateful that you have been so patient, understanding, and supportive of keeping one another safe thus far. Let us not relax our vigilance now. I cannot tell you when, but we are within sight of returning for worship later this year. As we continue to care for one another's health in the pandemic, we will be drawing closer to resuming in-person worship and other ministry activities.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pastor Greg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Lent 2021: "A Season of Hope"

We will continue our online/live stream worship gatherings throughout Lent. The pastors selected a theme and supporting materials from Lutheran World Relief (LWR). We believe this theme for worship, faith formation, and communal activities will be meaningful guidance in the traditional Lenten disciplines: prayer, fasting (personal sacrifice), and almsgiving.

Lent is a season of hope as Christians prepare for the fulfillment of our greatest hope: redemption and salvation announced for all humanity in the resurrection of Jesus on Easter. Our weekly themes and stories will come from five different locations of the global ministry of LWR. As your pastors, our goal is to help us take a global perspective on the needs of our neighbors and our calling to love our neighbor.

Here is an outline of our worship and learning journey during Lent. Each Wednesday evening will offer a brief Bible study followed by Holden Evening Prayer.

Feb. 17 - Ash Wednesday: Live stream worship at Noon and 6 p.m. concluding with drive-up Communion and imposition of ashes.

Feb. 24 - "TOUCHING HOPE: Meeting urgent needs during COVID-19"

March 3 - "HEARING HOPE: Spreading Hope after the Beirut Explosion"

March 10 - "SEEING HOPE: Loving communities after back-to-back hurricanes in Honduras"

March 17 - "SMELLING HOPE: Overcoming generational poverty in Zambia"

March 24 - "TASTING HOPE: Caring for refugees in Syria"

March 28 - Palm/Passion Sunday: Live stream worship at 9am

April 1 - Maundy Thursday: Live Stream worship with drive-up Communion at Noon & 6 p.m.

April 2 - Good Friday: Live stream worship featuring the Passion of our Lord and music at Noon & 6 p.m.

April 4 - Easter: Live stream worship at 9 a.m. concluding with drive-up Communion.

As a corporate act of fasting (personal sacrifice) and almsgiving, we encourage members to gather materials and assemble Personal Care Kits which will be shipped to LWR later this year. (You may also donate money to purchase the materials and the kits will be assembled at Grace.) Contents of each Personal Care Kit: light-weight bath towel, 2-3 bath-size bars of soap, 1 adult toothbrush, 1 sturdy comb, 1 metal nail clippers.

SPECIAL LENTEN WORSHIP OPPORTUNITY: Live stream of a "Healing of the Nations" prayer service. Date/time to be announced.

Grace Youth Ministry

Dir. of Youth & Young Adult Ministry: Anne Monroe – amonroe@gracehendersonville.com / 828-693-4890 x309

We would like to thank all youth, college students, and young adults who helped to serve as lectors and worship assistants during Advent and Christmas Eve worship services. We are grateful for your leadership!





Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service with Grace Youth Ministry



Traditionally on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Grace Youth Ministry participated in a Cross+Generational community wide service project. Since Covid-19 pandemic prevented the typical MLK Day of Service from happening on a wider scale, Anne arranged a GYM small group project for the Storehouse to continue and adapt the service tradition for this day.

Jake and Jenna, Senior and Sophomore Grace Youth, wrote this reflection together for the Martin Luther King Jr. observance shared over Zoom: *"In 2019 our youth group was able to visit the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tennessee which was an incredibly powerful experience. We learned so much about the horrors others faced in their fight for basic human rights. We will remain eternally grateful for their work, the work of others today, and hope that we can all stand together to continue the fight against injustice everywhere. It's our sacred responsibility to make sure that every voice is heard."*

Youth packaged together 94 beans and rice meals for the Storehouse of Henderson County, heard a presentation from the director about the services Storehouse provides to our community, and helped to lead a MLK observance over Zoom, and participated in interviews with the local newspaper and TV station. The beans and rice meal packages weighed 285 pounds and since each bag contains 8 servings, that will supplement 760 meals for the Storehouse clients. Thanks to Tom Morgan (Grace member and Storehouse volunteer), Lynn Staggs (Storehouse Director), Greg Dodd, and Jolie Herman for assisting with preparations and helping to implement this experience for our youth.

For more extensive coverage of the GYM project and other student quotes, see the Blue Ridge Now article here: <https://www.blueridgenow.com/story/news/2021/01/18/youth-groups-honor-mlks-legacy-program-food-donations/4205570001/>



Children & Family Ministry

Dir. of Children & Family Ministry: Jill Wingard – jwingard@gracehendersonville.com / 828-693-4890 x344

Recently the Oxford English Dictionary released the 2020 Word of the Year, except they couldn't decide on just one word. Just one more unprecedented event in a year full of them. My favorites of the words they chose are "Blursday - a day of the week that is indistinguishable for any other" and "Doomscrolling - the action of compulsively scrolling through social media or news feeds that relate bad news". So my prayer for all of us is that we can stop doomscrolling so that we can enjoy each day and not find ourselves on blursday, wondering what happened to the time that has passed.



January is usually a month of planning for the coming year, and yes there is planning going on, but instead of having one plan I feel like I have to have contingencies for every plan I make. I did take some time this month to clean out the "Sunday School art closet". Unlike previous time it has been reorganized, I was in full on purge mode and ended a three-hour cleaning (with the help of my daughters) with six 20-gallon bags of trash, two 20-gallon bags of recycling and four boxes of items that I gifted to a thrift store.



February brings Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the Lenten season. I will be offering an at-home Lenten Activity Kit for families. Each kits will include 12 plastic eggs that are numbered and filled, and a list of 12 readings/activities that correspond to each egg. The kit will also include a few simple art/service projects that can be done over the 40 days of Lent. Kits need to be reserved by Sunday, Feb. 14 and will be available for pick up at church. Make your reservation now at <https://forms.gle/Qm5XCXJHSgAWkoq46> or call or email myself or the church.

A Message from Our President: Vicki Marthaler



An excerpt from a Daily Devotional Book, "The Old Hermit's Almanac," by Edward Hays: "**February 2: Groundhog Day and the Feast of the Purification, Or Candlemas, the End of Traditional Christmas.** Forty Days after Christmas, this feast celebrates Jesus being presented in the temple, where the rites of purification were performed for Mary, His mother. Since the liturgy for this feast of Purification refers to Jesus as the Light of the World, it became the custom to bless candles on this day – thus the name Candle Mass or Candlemas. In former ages, this day marked the conclusion of the celebration of Christmas, and only then were home decorations removed.

Welcome to February! We'll have groundhogs looking for their shadows, hearts galore on Valentine's Day and then on Feb. 17, Ash Wednesday, the church invites us all to begin our 2021 Lenten journey.

Lent is often noted for a tradition of giving up something, I would like to suggest this year that instead of giving up something, we put on something. Instead of subtracting from life, we add to life. We find ourselves in a unique time with Covid, our daily companion. The pandemic has already subtracted much from our normal, daily lives. I propose we very intentionally start adding back to life. But how?

The other day I called one of our Grace ladies who happens to be facing a significant diagnosis. She was very open about her current situation. Life was changing for her in dramatic ways. When I asked what the doctor was recommending, she chuckled and said "Well, I have a whole new regiment of pills except one for my memory! And that's the pill I surely could use!" Then we both laughed! Her laughter was authentic and genuine. I came away from that phone conversation thanking God for humor and the gift of laughter.

Before Christmas I was visiting with another one of our Grace ladies whose life is changing because of her husband's diagnosis. There is much to learn about this condition and she was feeling quite overwhelmed. When I asked her what helps during the times she finds herself held so tightly in anxiety, she immediately responded, "Music." I had to agree with her that music is a wonderful gift from God that can transport us to a comforting, safe place. It strengthens the spirit and soothes the soul.

Around Thanksgiving my sister called me from Minnesota to tell me our Mom, who also lives in Minnesota in an assisted living facility, had tested positive for Covid. Mom struggled through isolating days and even spent four days in the hospital with congestive heart failure. None of that was fun. At all. I called every day. I sent cards. I prayed my head off. I sent her krumkakas! (a Norwegian cookie). And Mom was so thankful for each call and each card and each prayer and every krumkaka! She wasn't forgotten. She was remembered.

The Lenten season is almost upon us. If you are going to give up something, give up fear, anxiety and despair. If you would rather put on something, put on the Servant Heart of Christ and reach out in positive, uplifting ways to your family and neighbor -- share your love of Christ through humor, music, phone calls, cards and prayer, allowing the Spirit to inspire you.

Christmas decorations may be tucked away for another year, but the "Work of Christmas" continues. Be that Light in the needful times. We are called, gathered and enlightened to do nothing less.

For additional information about this and other ministries of the Women of the ELCA, see the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall or contact our president, Vicki Marthaler (218-849-5683).

Birthdays



| | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----|--------------------|------|--------------------|------|
| Ashley Albers | 2/2 | Vincent Rees | 2/8 | Anthony Pezzimenti | 2/20 |
| Barbara Arndt | 2/2 | Patti Romstadt | 2/8 | Jessie White | 2/20 |
| David Bair | 2/2 | Jacob Solano | 2/8 | Sharon Smith | 2/21 |
| James Florine | 2/2 | Jackson Bufalino | 2/9 | Mandy Gibson | 2/22 |
| Cathy Jackman | 2/2 | James Cline | 2/9 | Elizabeth Girard | 2/22 |
| Brent Janowiak | 2/2 | Susanne Stockman | 2/10 | Patrick Rose | 2/22 |
| George Spencer | 2/2 | Catherine Etterman | 2/11 | Dan Axtell | 2/24 |
| Carlene Belanger | 2/3 | Sandra Litogot | 2/11 | Anne Duffy | 2/24 |
| Jenny Solano | 2/3 | Susan Powell | 2/11 | Larry Schwake | 2/24 |
| Chris Graves | 2/4 | Muriel Lambert | 2/12 | Richard Honeycutt | 2/25 |
| James Nelson | 2/4 | Marilyn Pigors | 2/12 | Nadine Christensen | 2/27 |
| Matthew Samotis | 2/4 | Cynthia Simons | 2/12 | Marilyn Conrad | 2/27 |
| Leah Scroggin | 2/4 | Casey Brown | 2/13 | Kevin Duffy | 2/27 |
| Vianey Solano | 2/4 | Debra Lamb | 2/13 | Emily Freeman | 2/27 |
| William Brust | 2/6 | Sara Schmidt | 2/15 | Kathleen Matthews | 2/27 |
| Patricia Chambers | 2/6 | Lara Wingard | 2/15 | Madeline Salgado | 2/28 |
| Jonathan Lambert | 2/6 | Anthony Acosta- | | Mary Sebby | 2/28 |
| David De Graaf | 2/7 | Oviedo | 2/16 | Saul Solano | 2/28 |
| Joshua Friesen | 2/7 | Peggy Bumgarner | 2/16 | Douglas Wilder | 2/28 |
| Alejandrina Oviedo | 2/7 | Mark Marthaler | 2/16 | Karen Winch | 2/28 |
| Marie Mortensen | 2/8 | Cora Taylor | 2/17 | | |

Anniversaries

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|
| Hershel & Barbara Parrish | 2/2/2008 | Pat & Jane Rose | 2/16/1963 |
| Sal & Nancy Chiarenza | 2/14/1982 | David & Janie Berks | 2/20/1982 |
| Bill & Linda Daleure | 2/14/1975 | Bruce & Rae Foster | 2/20/1982 |
| Doug & Brenda Sigmon | 2/14/1987 | John & Dottie Mattern | 2/23/2003 |
| Dennis & Judy Waldrop | 2/14/2004 | Roger & Renne Barolet | 2/28/2008 |

2020 Year End Financial Summary

NOTE: The General Fund and Preschool Fund both include some of the PPP Loan that Grace received to help with personnel expenses. We have applied for forgiveness of the full amount.

General Fund

Total Revenues: \$1,095,502
 Expenses: \$1,092,987
 Revenues OVER expenses \$2,513

Capital Fund

Total Revenues: \$146,149
 Total Expenditures: \$133,770
 Revenues OVER expenses: \$12,379 (This is placed in "Capital Reserve" for future capital expenses.)

Mortgage balance

12/31/2019 outstanding balance: \$239,180
 12/31/2020 outstanding balance: \$134,985
 Amount of debt retired in 2020: \$104,195

Preschool Fund

Total Revenues: \$209,981
 Total Expenditures: \$216,616
 Revenues UNDER expenses: (\$6,635)



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Return Service Requested

Choir Rehearsal and Recording in the Time of CoVid-19

