



Grace Lutheran Church, ELCA  
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April 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

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## The Joy of Serving: Serving in Small Ways

### Safelight

In 2017 Safelight made it possible for me to escape a situation where I was basically kept as a slave by extended family members. I had no freedom, and I was forced to serve these people in whatever way they chose. When I first came into Safelight, I was so frightened that I was barely able to leave my room. It took me a long time before I was able to venture outside of what eventually became my haven.

Over four years, I have benefited from almost every program Safelight has to offer. The Shelter is where I started my Safelight journey to safety and freedom, and the staff there still provide me with encouragement and support when I visit. I receive therapeutic counseling to work through my past trauma. The Family Justice Center has supported me through legal challenges. I participated in the Job Training Program in all 3 areas, the Dandelion café, the Resale Store, and Sewing Our World Together where I also became a peer supervisor. The Phoenix Project, a collaboration between Safelight, AdventHealth and the Free Clinics, helped me to access regular routine medical care.

Since 2017, I have moved from my safe room in Safelight's Shelter to my own apartment, through the partnership Safelight has with the First United Methodist Church here in Hendersonville. Through Safelight's support and my own tenacity, I have been able to continue my education. While in the Shelter, I was able to complete my GED, and at my graduation, I was chosen to speak. I have earned a Guest Service Gold Certificate which is recognized internationally in the hospitality industry and I have also received a ServeSafe certificate in the area of food service. I am currently training at Blue Ridge Community College to become an LPC, and my ultimate goal is to become a RN. My on-going education has been supported by the Giving Circle. I have often voiced my gratitude to Safelight and its staff, but I am constantly reminded by them that they see me as the achiever.



### Returning to the House of the Lord



#### Psalm 133

A Song of Ascents.

*Behold now bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord: Who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God.<sup>2</sup>In the nights lift up your hands to the holy places, and bless ye the Lord.<sup>3</sup>May the Lord out of Sion bless thee, he that made heaven and earth. (Douay – Rheims 1899 American Edition)*

It has been called to my attention for the last three months, as we prepare to finally transition into worship, praying, learning, service, and fellowship in our congregation premises, that it will be similar to making a holy pilgrimage to God's sanctuary at Grace; this is certainly a meaning of our text in Psalm 133, a song of ascent, a song of returning, and a song of pilgrimage to the House of the Lord.

Like many of you, I have been missing and to some extent grieving not being able to see the faces, hear the voices, shake the hands, and embrace most of you who, for good reasons, have been confined and isolated from your loved ones. Even more, knowing that some of our dear brothers and sisters have departed from us for different reasons. I have learned from our Senior Pastor, that it is a blessing to share our faith journey with you all, knowing that it will be for a time that might come to an end with no anticipation nor desire on our part. In the meantime, we try to enjoy and celebrate every day. We fulfill our God-given calling to love and serve you all.

Grace ministry continues - not only adapting but transforming our challenges into opportunities to assist you in being faithful to your own God-given call, so we, "all the servants of the Lord, bless the Lord and be blessed by the One who "made heaven and earth," and sustains us by His grace.

Unity among us has always been necessary to nurture our faith through every single ministry we embrace and services we provide to our neighbors, near and far. Now, at post-pandemic new days, seeking and establishing unity, centered on our common faith in our risen Lord and our commitment to love and serve our neighbors in need, becomes uppermost important. Mirroring social polarization into our church life has become a burden that has never been needed and it hinders us working to continue being the feet and hands of Christ, for the sake of the world.

Unity might require crossing "cultures" and ethnicity to overcome our fears of others who are perceived differently, and then we will become the one body of Christ.

**Amen.**

Pastor Alfredo Oviedo

# Grace Youth Ministry

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

## Grace Youth Ministry sending joy and hope to others



One GYM tradition is to assemble care packages filled with delicious snacks, fun Lutheran objects, and heartfelt encouraging letters to send to Grace college students. This year, we were able to send these boxes of joy to 17 students.



Brevard College Junior Syedi shares: "After a long day, I came home to my mom saying I had a package waiting for me. I did not put any thought into what package it was

until I got into my room. I literally cried when I was opening it. Thank you and the Grace Youth Ministry so much! This really brightened up my week and made me feel so loved!"



University of Chapel Hill Freshman Elise said: "I was super excited to get the care package because I got notes from my friends and a craft my brother made for me! I

am having a good time at UNC, going out when I can safely and meeting people over zoom!"



A new service project this year for GYM was to participate in the congregational Lenten project of assembling personal care kits for Lutheran World Relief. The students put together kits with supplies donated by Grace members, learned about Lutheran World Relief, and had a picnic dinner. Thanks to all who donated supplies or kits to send hope through this Lenten project!



## Souper Bowl totals

Even though inclement weather canceled our Grace Youth Ministry annual collection, friends and members of Grace donated 292 pounds of food and \$544.25 to the Storehouse of Henderson County. Thank you for your generosity!

## Called Congregational Meeting: 2021 Proposed Budget

Sunday, April 25, 10:30 a.m.

During its meeting on March 14, the Congregational Council voted to call a Congregational Meeting for Sunday, April 25 at 10:30 a.m. via Zoom for the sole purpose of consideration and voting on the recommended 2021 Proposed Budget. Because this is a called meeting, no other business can be considered other than that specified for the called meeting.

Members will receive the 2021 Proposed Budget materials in advance plus a paper ballot for their vote via USPS. The number of ballots cast will constitute a quorum for this meeting. The 2021 Proposed Budget and ballots will be mailed to all eligible households the week after Easter, April 6-9.

Additionally, the Council specified the deadline to receive ballots will be 2pm on Friday, April 30. Members may return ballots by mail or in the drop box at the front entrance prior to the deadline.

President Terrell West will reconvene the Called Congregational Meeting during live stream worship on May 2 to announce the balloting results.

One final action taken by the Congregational Council related to this year's budget process was the adoption of a motion to extend the continuation of the 2020 Budget through April 30, 2021.

### Additional Council Actions During March 14, 2021 Meeting

+ Heard update reports from the 4 Goal Teams of the 2020 Strategic Plan.

+ Learned about and invites the congregation to a Zoom update meeting on April 12 for our ministry partnership with Anastasia Church in Durango, Mexico.

+ Heard an update on Grace finances:

General Fund for Feb.: revenues = \$93,111; expenses = \$82,062; net for the month = \$11,049

Capital Fund for Feb.: revenue = \$21,479; expenses = \$7,980; net for the month = \$13,499

Outstanding balance on our mortgage note = \$128,443

Preschool Fund for Feb.: revenue = \$1,037; expenses = \$10,969. With Preschool still closed, this is to be expected.

+ Council agreed to study the book Abundance: Creating a Culture of Generosity, by Mike Ward. Keith Johnson will lead the study, one chapter each month.

+ Appointed as Lay Voting Members to the 2021 NC Synod Assembly: Hal & Ruthie Derrick; Ken & Chris Ring. A young adult and a Hispanic member remain to be appointed. Assembly will be totally online and election of a bishop will be held.

+ Agreed to hold a called meeting at 4pm on March 21 for the sole purpose of receiving and adopting a 2021 Propose Budget.

## A Message from Our President: Vicki Marthaler

"April showers, bring May flowers."

"After the rain, the rainbow."

"The darkest hour is just before dawn."

John 5:24 Jesus said *"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears My Word and believes Him Who sent Me, has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life."*

As I watched the news last week, the announcers were reflecting on this year of Covid. Lives have been forever changed and many, many lives have been lost. The death toll in this country alone is staggering. I could feel my heart being weighed down so I did what many people do. I switched the channel.



Have you ever had an experience where God would like you to know something and He won't let you go until you have heard it? God would not have us live in despair and in darkness. We are not to grieve as those with no hope. (1 Thessalonians 4:13)

So, I clicked to another channel and an episode of NCIS was playing. I like NCIS so I settled down to catch up with the storyline and, lo and behold, Gibbs' good friend Tobias had just discovered his daughter unconscious and she was whisked to the hospital. The doctors were unable to revive her and she died. Tobias tries to stand but dissolves into overwhelming sobs so Gibbs encompasses his friend in his arms and they weep together. The scene then goes to the NCIS office where the co-workers are somberly sitting at their desks. Director Vance walks into the office area with a coat over his arm and a piece of paper in his hand. He is obviously going somewhere. He is asked where he is going. He is going to the hospital –hopefully the hospital will let him in (Covid restrictions may keep him out.) But what is in his hand? It is a poem. Director Vance hopes to share this poem as the words brought him hope and comfort when his wife died. Coroner Jimmy says that poem brought him comfort when his wife died. The co-workers ask if Director Vance would read the poem aloud and he does. (by now I am thinking of all those of NCIS who have died...)

The poem read is by Merrit Malloy. It is called "Epitaph." It begins: ***"When I die, give what's left of me away...."*** By now my eyes are full of tears and I'm looking for a tissue. I hear bits and pieces ***"...when you need me, put your arms around anyone and give them what you need to give to me.....I want to leave you something...look for me....you can love me most by hands touching hands....Love doesn't die. People do. So, when all that's left of me is love, give me away."***

***"So when all that's left of me is love, give me away."***

As I wiped my eyes and blew my nose, I couldn't help but think – that's what Jesus wants us to do. Jesus is love. Love does not die. We are to give Jesus, Love, away! We are not to be stuck by the empty tomb crying and grieving. We are not to be boarded up in a room scared to show our faces. We are not to be like the two walking to Emmaus trying to get away from it all and wondering what we should be about. We are to give Jesus, His Love, away – over and over again. God loves this world. He sent Jesus to this world that we might know His Love. Jesus comes to live in our very hearts. His love is in us.....and we are to give it away.

So dear friends in Christ – take heart! Better yet, take the Love of Christ within you and generously and with great delight, give it away! Hug your loved ones still with you. Call those

who are far away or isolated. Pray for one another. Serve as you are able. Lift up a cause. Lead when you can. Crochet. Sew. Quilt. Forgive. Encourage. Sing. Clean. Send cards. Paint. Write. Be patient. Embrace. Wear your mask. Listen. Serve. Weep with those who weep. Rejoice with those who rejoice. Play. Color. Create. Be open to the leading of Christ's loving Spirit. His list is endless!

I can't say that I ever considered NCIS a spiritual show, but last week, God spoke to me through that episode and encouraged my heavy heart. May He speak to you in clear ways as well. You are loved. With an everlasting Love. Please, give it away!

**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).**

**Servant Saturday 2021**  
Rescheduled to Saturday, Sept. 11

Servant Saturday 2021, which is usually held in April, will be delayed this year until Saturday, Sept. 11. We have scheduled the event to take place the same weekend as the ELCA National volunteer day "God's Work Our Hands"...which is set for Sunday, Sept. 12.

Thanks to everyone who has participated in previous Servant Saturdays. No special talents are required. We will have many types of projects from outdoor landscaping, cleanup to indoor painting and much more.

As disciples of God, our efforts to assist the agencies here in Henderson County will give you the joy of knowing your efforts will reach out to support the less fortunate.



By directing designated Choice Dollars (\$M) through Thrivent Choice, eligible members recommend where Thrivent Financial distributes some of its charitable outreach grant dollars.

**Grace Lutheran Church**

Barbara Jean Fountain  
Joy Kiefer  
Edward Lichtenhagen  
Judith Lichtenhagen  
Emily Trexler

**Grace Lutheran Preschool**

Robert Frederiksen  
Warren Weber  
Yong O Weber

**Thank you for designating Grace for your  
Thrivent Choice dollars!**

## Birthdays



Kathlene Brems	4/1	Nancy Bellick	4/13	Yong Weber	4/21
Jake Patterson	4/1	Vicki Marthaler	4/14	Chandler Bolick	4/22
Catherine Samulski	4/1	Lynda Martinez	4/14	Daniel Solano	4/22
Diane Sellers	4/1	Francia Shaw	4/14	Pamela Badin	4/24
Fred Martin	4/3	Lois Roach	4/15	Nancy Christy	4/24
Adelaide Haack	4/5	Philip Seidel	4/15	Max King	4/24
Annah Lord	4/5	Carol Gillett	4/16	Jean Vierra	4/25
Jennifer Bufalino	4/6	Jeffrey Michels	4/16	Brenda Fisher	4/26
James Wiggins	4/6	Rosaleen Dawes	4/17	Roderick Hansen	4/26
James Oneacre	4/8	Dale Beardsley	4/18	Anne Monroe	4/26
Steve Walker	4/8	Maria Resendiz	4/18	Aram Davis	4/27
Edward McIntosh	4/9	David Sebby	4/18	Kenneth Langsdorf	4/27
Emily Trexler	4/9	Tom Morgan	4/19	Renne Barolet	4/28
Jan Hoffmann	4/10	Karen Bowman	4/20	Dave Slagle	4/28
Ann Janes	4/11	Thomas Tews	4/20	Donna Hamilton	4/29
Delia Jovel Dubon	4/12	Suzanne Hale	4/21	Melissa Walden	4/29
Janice Mickle	4/12	Kristine Sochia	4/21		

## Anniversaries

Chris & Gaillee Davis	4/4	Doug & Charlynn Fennell	4/18
David & Myrnelle Wulff	4/6	Wayne & Leah Scroggin	4/19
Ann Janes	4/7	Chirs & Christine Smith	4/19
Joe & Kathy Stancar	4/8	Rick & Virginia Rehn	4/20
Gary & Pat Gardner	4/9	Jim & Janice Hendley	4/21
Ron & Bridget Monroe	4/11	Max & Alli King	4/26
Steve & Ivy Walker	4/16	George & Deanna Plowman	4/28
Bruce & Lesley Darrah	4/4	Saul & Vianey Solano	4/29

## Thank you!

Many thanks to all who contributed their time, effort and food and hygiene items to the spring Interfaith Collection in February. It was again a huge success due to the generosity of so many Grace Lutheran members. In spite of the adjustments we made to the collection process this year, we still collected nearly 1,500 pounds of non-perishable food and paper products as well as hygiene items to help our struggling "neighbors in need".

A special thanks to Bonnie Wells, Becky Schmidt, Diane Sellers and Shelley Clay who assisted in the collection, and Greg Dodd who delivered it all in the activity bus and unloaded the items! Thank you all for your generosity and giving spirits!

Claudia Northrup



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Hendersonville, NC 28739  
\*\*\*Return Service Requested\*\*\*

## Perserverance - Regathering is Coming into View

*"... let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us..." - Hebrews 12:1*

Since the pandemic began 13 months ago, we have endured a roller coaster of a year! We have isolated, quarantined, masked up, gloved up, distanced ourselves, cancelled travel, Zoomed until our eyes glazed over, and worshiped only online. We have also grieved deaths and loss of interpersonal interactions. Your perseverance has kept neighbors safe and allowed Grace to avoid gatherings we all yearn for but which held a high possibility of spreading the CoVid19 virus.

As we persevere, we are actively preparing the facility to welcome you back when the time comes. We are installing the cameras and new equipment used for live streaming worship. Ionization units to purify the air are being installed to limit the spread of anything airborne - allergens, bacteria, mold, and viruses. The interior of the building will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized. We plan to have these preparations completed by the end of April.

Our Reopening Task Force is preparing updated safety protocols and plans for opening in several stages so that everyone is safe and we avoid setbacks. We are watching the local positivity rate for CoVid tests. March 18, the 2-week rolling average for Henderson County was 5.3% - almost at the 5% or less marker public health officials desire. We are getting CLOSE!

THANK YOU for persevering! The time to safely regather for worship is getting closer with every vaccination. You can help by staying safe and getting vaccinated. See you soon!

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## CoVid Vaccine Update

Governor Roy Cooper and North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Mandy K. Cohen, M.D. announced beginning on March 17, people in Group 4 who have a medical condition that puts them at higher risk of serious illness and people who live in certain congregate settings will be eligible for vaccination. The rest of Group 4, which includes other essential workers will become eligible April 7.

### Here are some resources to assist you in finding a vaccine:

- Pardee: <https://vaccine.unchealthcare.org/>
- NCDHHS: <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/vaccines>
- Henderson County Health: <https://www.hendersoncountync.gov/health/page/covid-19-vaccines>
- Advent Health: <https://www.adventhealth.com/coronavirus-resource-hub/adventhealth-coronavirus-vaccine-resource-hub>
- Polk County: [http://www.polknc.org/consolidated\\_human\\_services/index.php#.YE9XWJ1KjIU](http://www.polknc.org/consolidated_human_services/index.php#.YE9XWJ1KjIU)
- Transylvania County: <https://transylvaniahealth.org/>
- Walgreens: <https://www.walgreens.com/topic/promotion/covid-vaccine.jsp>