



Grace Notes is published monthly by Grace United Methodist Church in Joliet, IL.

# GRACE NOTES

Volume 9 Issue 1

January 2021

*This is God's Word on the subject: I'll show up and take care of you as I promised and bring you back home. I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out—plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for. Jeremiah 29:11*

From the pen of the Old Testament Prophet, God is about to do a new thing for the people of Israel. God was silent but God was present. God was ready to bring Israel home. That was the promise.

When January comes around, we are ready to roll out promises to make us closer to God, to be better individuals who are given the awesome gift of stewardship in all facets of life and to love more. I know it sounds ambitious and we narrow it down to something that we can easy handle. After all, the new year is a time for new beginnings. It is that time where it feels like anything is possible. We hear the scripture, "All things are possible with God."

What an awesome promise for us today as we look forward to *healing, returning and renewing*, our life together as expressed here at Grace United Methodist Church. The year 2020 will be remembered as the year of the Pandemic. It is also a bold claim to say that our faith in Jesus Christ increased because we experience God's sovereignty during this tough season. When the virus hits closer to "home" we discover how our loved ones, colleagues, friends were affected and it is so hard to respond. We hear stories of "agape" love that continue to make a difference. A year ago, we first heard about this virus as something that will not reach us. Then everything changed the following month. Even when the

vaccine is now available, we pray for an equitable distribution locally and globally. As Paul said, "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it." (I Corinthians 12:26)

Worship life is central to us. I just read the challenge of a Pastor who noted that a majority of our churches rely on this central core of faith. But he also shared that the church has many ministries and so his church is flourishing in the midst of the Pandemic. Think about it. We are glad to announce that

Grace Church paid **100 percent** of our apportionment to mission and ministry. You are a vital part of the commitment. We have many ministries that is ongoing. We need to affirm that.

I look forward to 2021 as an opportunity to renew our community life together. My vision is to invite all of you for "Zoom meetings" in the area of mission, faith formation and discipleship. We have developed new terms to describe our present state and for the church—the quarantine church. But we are moving to a post quarantine church.

What are the challenges and opportunities?

Thomas S. Rainer offers six challenges: Gather differently and Better, Seize the opportunity to Reach the Digital World, reconnect with the community, take prayer to a new and powerful level, Rethink Your facilities for emerging opportunities & Make lasting Changes that will make a difference.

That is my invitation to all of you as we begin the new year and refocus for the days ahead. But then there are things that never

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## ENJOY THE CONVENIENCE OF ELECTRONIC GIVING

As Grace Church prepares for a new year, it is important to know what support we can depend on from our congregation members. By knowing what you are willing to commit financially, we are able to better plan for the future. Please consider setting up a recurring giving plan. Automating your financial commitments means your contributions will be received on a steady, uninterrupted basis. To set up a recurring giving schedule, visit us online at [www.graceumcjoliet.org](http://www.graceumcjoliet.org), locate the "Vanco" button and set up your recurring giving schedule. This is a secured site and many of our members are already contributing in this way.

The first time you give, you will select a password that will enable you to log in at any time and make changes to your giving or view your complete online giving history. Or if it's easier, complete a paper authorization form and return it to the church office.

Contributions can be debited automatically from your checking or savings account. Our electronic giving program offers convenience for you and provides much-needed donation consistency for our congregation. If you are currently giving on a weekly basis, you will no longer need to write out 52 checks a year or prepare 52 envelopes. And, when travel, illness or other circumstances prevent you from attending services, this program will allow your weekly offerings to continue on an uninterrupted basis.

Giving online is easy and allows you to set up automatic recurring contributions and view your complete online giving history from anywhere you have access to the Internet. Simply follow these easy steps:

- 1) Visit the church website at [www.graceumcjoliet.org](http://www.graceumcjoliet.org),
- 2) Click on the "Vanco" button,
- 3) Click on the Create Profile button, then
- 4) Follow the onscreen instructions to create an online profile and to schedule your recurring contributions.

Online Giving allows you to at any time to set up an automatic donation plan, change your donation plan, make a one-time donation or view your online donation history. As you contemplate future contributions, please consider electronic giving.



### Online Donation

[Return to our Home Page](#)

**Donations**

If you've already created a profile, please "Log In" on the right, otherwise continue.

General Operating:	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
Capital Fund:	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
Mission of the Month:	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
<b>Total:</b>	\$0.00

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Donation Frequency:  ([About recurring donations](#))

Donation Start Date:  mm/dd/yy

**Log In** [help](#)

Email Address:

Password:

[Forgot your Email Address or Password?](#)

**Create Your Online Profile**



John & Kathryn Moore

January 5, 2009

David & Debra Black

January 16, 2001



Russ Ghilain has a small solid wood desk that he is offering or free. Needs some minor repair or use as is. Dimensions are 36" W 18"D x 30"H. Call Russ if interested at, 815-353-8648.



1/2—Jia Joy Renzi, Samantha Kazak  
 1/3—Joseph Sabella, Erin Lutz  
 1/6—Maria Chaney  
 1/8—Scott Paulson, Mike Parro  
 1/9—Cheryl Deardurff  
 1/10—Christine Butler  
 1/11—Carol Cook  
 1/15—Patrick Morrow, Gus Kramer  
 1/16—John Louis Boswell, Florana Rocha-Gray  
 1/18—Kaliah Dolph, Braydon Hocking  
 1/19—Justin Farrar, Nancy Leggett  
 1/24—Diane Parro  
 1/25—Mark Landers  
 1/26—Karen Storcz  
 1/31—Stephen Meister, Mason Meister, Kelly Renzi

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change. The sun rises and sets accordingly. There is a rhythm of life and death. The steadfast of the Lord is constant. The joy of knowing Jesus Christ in our hearts is the rock of our faith. Steadfast. Solid.

God has a plan for all us. *Plan to bless us and give us a future with hope.* We are being crafted for something new. I'm excited to be a part of the Church and we have much to offer to continue building the beloved body of Christ. Make disciples. Offer Christ. Let us do so in the spirit of peace, a lasting peace for the world and the brokenness we see daily.

Happy New Year and Blessings.  
 Pastor Romir R. Esguerra





# Thank You so much!

I would like to send a huge thank you to everyone for the good thoughts and prayers. The surgery went well and I am cancer free  
Debbie Macias.

Dear Grace Family,

Thank you for the cards, calls, prayers, and memorial gifts we received after the death of my sister Sue. They were greatly appreciated at this difficult time.

Diane Lutz and Family.



# Thank You

Thank you for all the nice people of Grace church who sent birthday cards and Get Well cards and messages regarding the death of my brother. A lot happening in 21/2 months and big decisions made. Mainly my falling so often and my 3 sons feeling that I should not live alone. Still getting rehab and getting strong but injured my right eye and it affects my eyesight. I am ready to go into another chapter of my life with God's help and find lots to enjoy still.

May God bless everyone. Stay safe .

Love to all, Dorothy Atkins

## ANGEL TREE

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Salvation Army Angel Tree. Thirty people picked angels for needy children off of the virtual Angel Tree. I know that many did not have the capabilities to participate virtually. Hopefully next year we will be back to the Christmas tree in the narthex and the many present that the very generous people of Grace Church will bring in for this mission.

## MEALS ON WHEELS CANDY DRIVE

Thanks to your generous donations of cash and candy, members of our Confirmation Class and their families packaged 870 holiday candy gifts for the Will County Meals on Wheels in their homes December 7<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>. Gabby Haywood (Program Director) is grateful to all of you for your continued generosity. THANK YOU to everyone here at Grace who participated.



Thanks to everyone who has sent in a commitment card as part of our stewardship effort. You should have received a confirmation from our Financial Secretary. If you still wish to send in a card and need one, please contact the church office. Our Church Council has approved a budget for 2021 based on anticipated giving.

# November

## 2020 Income & Expense Summary

Comparison to expected cash flow for budget approved 12/15/19

	November		Year to Date	
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
<b>INCOME</b>	\$27,200	\$25,267	\$321,500	\$303,010
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Apportionment	\$2,707	\$1,794	\$29,775	\$19,734
Pastor Salary & Benefits	\$7,585	\$7,558	\$91,015	\$90,263
Personnel	\$8,148	\$5,892	\$97,090	\$85,459
Administration	\$1,058	\$477	\$11,642	\$9,672
Programming	\$1,408	\$597	\$15,492	\$6,844
Church Buildings	<u>\$6,483</u>	<u>\$9,367</u>	<u>\$90,117</u>	<u>\$77,247</u>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	\$27,389	\$25,685	\$335,131	\$289,219
<b>SURPLUS OR (DEFICIT):</b>	-\$189	-\$418	-\$13,631	\$13,791

### NOTES:

- 1) Of the \$18.5k shortage in the income category, only \$9k was due to not receiving pledge income.
- 2) With the shut down, expenses are about \$46k less than expected through November.

## OFFERING ENVELOPES FOR 2021

Since our current offering envelopes have no expiration dates on them you can continue to use them in the New Year and beyond until you run out of them (your account # will remain the same). Be sure to contact the church office if additional envelopes are needed.

Thanks for your continued financial support of Grace Church.



Grace United Methodist Church

1718 Avalon Avenue

Joliet, Illinois 60435-5799



HAPPY  
New Year

May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us...

PSALM 90:17a