



# the Grace Messenger

A monthly publication of Grace University Lutheran Church  
JANUARY 2021 — VOLUME 118 — ISSUE 1

## PASTOR'S PAGE

“The light at the end of the tunnel”, is a metaphor used to refer to signs that a long period of adversity is coming to an end. According to Wordorigins, the metaphor, if not the exact phrasing, dates to at least 1879 when it appears in a letter by writer George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans) about a recent bout with an illness.

Throughout the Old and New Testament, there are scripture passages of hope that God will come to rescue the people ... from oppression, from war, from calamity, from persecution.

For God will deliver the needy when they cry for help,  
The afflicted also, and they who have no helper.  
God will have compassion on the poor and needy,  
And the lives of the needy God will save.  
God will rescue their life from oppression and violence,  
And their blood will be precious in God’s sight. (Psalm 72:12-14)

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.  
(Jeremiah 29:11)

Passages like these have brought hope to people across the centuries, living under all kinds of injustice, suffering from all forms of illness, living through pandemics brought about by people’s inhumanity as well as by bacteria and viruses.

If you pay attention to the news, you will notice many saying “we are now seeing the light at the end of the tunnel.” Some are referring to the recent election results and its aftermath and the approaching inauguration, and others to the rolling out of vaccines proven to be effective against Covid-19, and still others to both.

Faith in God, hope in God’s intervention, are deeply important. God is good, and we are called to trust in God’s goodness. But it doesn’t end there.



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The deadline for submissions to the FEBRUARY Grace Messenger is TUESDAY, JANUARY 19.



[Graceattheu.org](http://Graceattheu.org)

[Grace University Lutheran Church Facebook Page](#)

[Grace University Families on Facebook](#)

[Grace University YouTube Channel](#)

## WORSHIP *in* DECEMBER

*We worship apart, but together. Worship information is emailed on Saturdays at 5 pm and are posted on our website. Worship videos are on our YouTube channel.*

*Sundays at 9:30 am join us for "Live: Stories & Songs" on our Facebook page – a worshipful and fun time for all ages.*

**Sunday, January 3**

**Second Sunday of Christmas**

**Epiphany Talent Show and Worship with Christmas Story  
Live Worship via Zoom (see p. 3) with Holy Communion**

**Jeremiah 31:7-14** *Joy at the gathering of God's scattered flock*

**Psalm 147**

**Ephesians 1:3-14** *The will of God made known in Christ*

**John 1:[1-9] 10-18** *God with us: the incarnation of the word*

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**Sunday, January 10**

**Baptism of Our Lord**

**Table of Mercy Setting, with Word & Art**

**Genesis 1:1-5** *God creates light*

**Psalm 29**

**Acts 19:1-7** *Baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus*

**Mark 1:4-11** *Revelation of Christ as God's servant*

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**Sunday, January 17**

**Second Sunday after Epiphany**

**1 Samuel 3:10-19 [11-20]** *The calling of Samuel*

**Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18**

**1 Corinthians 6:12-20** *Glorify God in your body*

**John 1:43-51** *The calling of the first disciples*

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**Sunday, January 24**

**Third Sunday after Epiphany**

**Jonah 3:1-4, 10** *Repentance at Ninevah*

**Psalm 62:5-12**

**1 Corinthians 7:29-31** *Living in the end times*

**Mark 1:14-20** *The calling of the disciples at the sea*

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**Sunday, January 31**

**Fourth Sunday after Epiphany**

**Reconciling in Christ Sunday**

**Deuteronomy 18:15-20** *The prophet speaks with God's authority*

**Psalm 111**

**1 Corinthians 8:1-13** *Limits to liberty: the case of food offered to idols*

**Mark 1:21-28** *The healing of one with an unclean spirit*

*Pastor's Page continued...*

As we enter into the year 2021, after a difficult 2020, with all the revelations of racial inequity and economic injustice and political corruption, it is important to turn again to scripture:

A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. (Ezekiel 36:26)

If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. (James 2:15-17)

So much work has been done by so many .. for justice, for bringing health and healing, for fairness and honesty in politics, for peace ... but we haven't yet reached the proverbial promised land.

Yes, we can see some light now, there is hope, and promise, of a new day. Faith in God's goodness matters deeply, trusting in God's goodness matters deeply, and then the work begins.

With renewed hearts, with renewed spirits, we are called to be the hands and feet of God ... to work for equality and justice for all people, to do all we can to heal the earth, the water, the air, to love each other with a love deep and wide, a love which comes from our Creator.

With God's grace, it could be quite a new year!

*Pastor Dan*

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## PRAYER AT NIGHTFALL

quiet poetry quiet song  
quiet prayer quiet together

**Thursdays 8:30–8:50 pm**

**Facebook Live on Grace's page**

Questions? Please contact Pastor Mary:  
[pastormary@graceattheu.org](mailto:pastormary@graceattheu.org)

## DAY BY DAY WITH GRACE: JANUARY 2021

Please join Grace members in listening to and reflecting on Martin Luther King, Jr's *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*. The letter is dated April 16th, 1963.

The letter was written in response to eight white clergy who criticized King and his actions in support of racial justice. As we live this chapter in the struggle for racial justice brought on by the murder of Mr. George Floyd in our congregation's home city, let us look back for wisdom to challenge us, guide us, and hold us accountable to act for racial justice.

Beginning on January 1st, on the days leading up to MLK Day, you will receive a daily reading of a portion of the letter read aloud by a Grace member. On January 18<sup>th</sup> — MLK Day — you will receive a recording of the entire letter read by a collective of Grace members. These readings are brought to you by the Grace Racial Equity Committee. (Visit [THIS](#) to get a preview.)

*These daily emails are sent to those on the "Daily E-votionals for Advent and Lent" list...you are already on the list if you received the "Fling Wide the Door" emails during Advent. If you are not currently on the list but would like to receive these, there are two options:*

- "Update your preferences" in the footer section of any email sent to the Grace community (through MailChimp) — best for those who already are on our email lists
- Visit our website, [www.graceattheu.org](http://www.graceattheu.org), head to the "Contact Us" menu, and see "Mailing List" there. A link to sign up for emails is there...or you can click this link to accomplish the same thing: <https://graceattheu.us6.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=a3888eea25351b8a9f6c01012&id=fe54bc3bdc>

## ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, January 24, 2021 @ 11:30 am via Zoom

The agenda will include several important mission planning items: a few elections, adoption of our budget for 2021, a second vote on the proposed constitutional amendments which were approved last spring, an update on our pastoral transition, and an update on building enhancement.

Written reports for 2020 and the proposed 2021 budget will be available to you electronically in advance of the meeting.

Please mark your calendars and plan to participate.

**Connect to this congregational meeting through Zoom** — click the link OR open Zoom then enter Meeting ID and Passcode OR dial in using one of the phone numbers above the link.



## SUNDAY SCHOOL EPIPHANY PROGRAM — SUNDAY, JANUARY 3

**9:30 am Talent Show & 10:30 am  
Worship with Epiphany Program  
& Holy Communion**

This year's pageant (formerly known as the Christmas Program) will be held via Zoom in two parts. Join us to celebrate the gifts and talents of Grace children and families, and to hear and see the whole Christmas story that morning!

*Connecting through Zoom:*

### 9:30 AM TALENT SHOW

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83858736411?pwd=TFpUYTJROGIGWDIIQkNKNHdRSDFFZz09>

Meeting ID: 838 5873 6411

Passcode: 866569

### 10:30 AM WORSHIP WITH EPIPHANY PROGRAM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83540206040?pwd=S3pYVzBiSWMrb2xrNjZuejNyZHZLUT09>

Meeting ID: 835 4020 6040

Passcode: 743310

To call in to a Zoom gathering using your touchtone phone, first dial by your area, then enter the Meeting ID and Passcode:

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)  
+1 301 715 8592 US (Wash, D.C.)  
+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)  
+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)  
+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)  
+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)  
+1 408 638 0968 US (San Jose)

### Congregational Meeting Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85754021171?pwd=MkcrTEJjQ2xXU1pQdWQ5eHpWZk11QT09>

Meeting ID: 857 5402 1171

Passcode: 824115

## GRACE UNIVERSITY: 2ND SEMESTER

The 1st Semester of Grace University was a success. 17 classes were offered by a faculty of over 15 people. Close to 80 people participated in the classes. What a treat and gift to have Grace members offering their knowledge and gifts to all of us in this way. One teacher (Susan Wootten) was even interviewed for an article in a local paper!!! KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED AND YOURS EARS OPEN FOR NEWS OF OUR UPCOMING SECOND SEMESTER, THAT WILL BEGIN IN LATE JANUARY. THE FUN AND LEARNING CONTINUES!!!



## GRACE WOMEN'S MINI RETREATS

**Saturday mornings 9:00am – 12noon  
via Zoom**

**Epiphany—January 30; Lent—March 20**

As we can't retreat together in person, we will do the next best thing. You are invited to sign up for these mini retreat experiences. Each one will highlight a different theme. Pastor Mary will facilitate the mornings, which include small group time, alone time and large group time. We will attempt to create a retreat-like tone, even as we gather via Zoom. If you want to join but need guidance on how to use Zoom, please let Pastor Mary know.

All you need is a quiet space, comfortable clothes, a journal, and the gift of your presence. We gather because we need the nourishment of shared experiences, wisdom, deep listening, and reflecting on matters of the heart.

Please sign up by emailing Pastor Mary at [pastormary@graceattheu.org](mailto:pastormary@graceattheu.org). There is no cost and no maximum limit for the group. In lieu of a retreat fee, you are invited to make a donation to support the ministry of the ARC Retreat Center (<https://www.arcretreat.org/give-today>).

## A NEW GRACE BOOK STUDY *White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity*

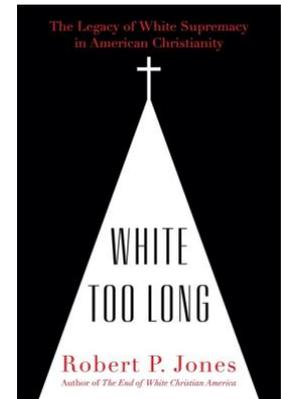
by Robert P. Jones

Robert Jones is the CEO and Founder of the Public Religion Research Institute, and a scholar and commentator on religion and politics. A white southerner immersed in the church since childhood, Jones uses personal stories, history, research data, and theological reflection to honestly face the "white elephant" in the room, namely, the tragic interweaving of culture, religion and white supremacy.

Please contact Pastor Mary if you would like to be part of this study. **We will meet via Zoom for five weeks on Wednesdays at 4:00-5:15 pm beginning January 13 and ending February 10.**

If possible, please have pp. 1-53 read for the first session.

The book's title is attributed to James Baldwin's quote from the New York Times, Feb. 2, 1968:



*I will flatly say that the bulk of this country's white population impresses me, and has so impressed me for a very long time, as being beyond any conceivable hope of moral rehabilitation. They have been white, if I may so put it, too long...*

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## GRACE STORIES

Dear members and friends of the Grace Community: As part of the process of seeking new pastoral leadership, I am helping to write the congregational site profile that will be used to describe Grace to potential candidates. We are looking for some of the stories that you believe show the character, experience, sense of mission and faith of this congregation. You can write your story on one page or less and send it to me. Or you can simply contact me to tell me the story, or just to tell me what story you would like to tell. I can collect the information and follow up with the authors and story tellers as needed. Thank You! Here is my contact information:

**Daniel Olson, 1064 Cleveland Ave S., St. Paul, MN, 55116.**

**[OLSO1981@UMN.EDU](mailto:OLSO1981@UMN.EDU)**

**651-646-0315 (text and voice mail)**

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## THE WHITE PRIVILEGE OF MY COUNTERFEIT \$20 BILL

by Mary Lowe

On May 25, 2020, police approached Mr. George Floyd in his car after a store employee reported that he had attempted to pay for an item with a counterfeit \$20 bill. (To date, it has not been proven that George Floyd used a counterfeit bill, or if he did, that he *knew* it was fake.) Within minutes, Mr. Floyd was dead at the hands of police. A few days after his murder, I recalled that I, too, had once tried to pay for an item with a counterfeit \$20 bill. The contrast between his experience as an African American man and mine as a white woman could not be more extreme.

Several years ago, I treated my family to lunch at a waterfront restaurant. I paid with \$50 bills and received a \$20 bill as part of my change. After lunch, we popped into a mini mart to get some sodas. I handed the cashier a \$20 bill. The clerk checked it with a counterfeit detector pen, handed it back and told me that the bill was a fake. I don't remember exactly how I responded but I probably said, "Wow. I'm sorry." I assume I then paid with a credit card and left with the sodas and the counterfeit bill.

I knew that the bill had come from the waterfront restaurant, so I called and told them they had given me a fake \$20. The manager apologized profusely and offered me a \$20 gift card for the inconvenience.

In my story, the police were not called. The mini mart cashier believed me. I was allowed to pay with other currency. I was physically unharmed. I returned safely to our car. The restaurant manager believed me. I got a gift card.

My white privilege provided advantages at every step. This privilege that I bear in my body and rely every day on is the same white privilege that contributed to Mr. Floyd's murder and to the ongoing oppression of African Americans and other individuals of color.

In the gospels, Jesus used his conversations with privileged people (the educated, religious leaders, Romans, and the wealthy) to create aha moments. Jesus exposed their privilege, revealing their sins, offered forgiveness, and envisioned a new way of living. I pray that each day I can recognize and repent for my privilege and commit to using my abilities and my access to work for equity and liberation for all of my neighbors.

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## SEEKING "AHA" MOMENT STORIES

*Do you have a story to share about when you became aware of race or perhaps an experience that helped you change your behavior in relation to people who don't share your skin color? If you are interested in writing your story (about 400 words or less) please contact Niki Johnson: [nikijohnson29@yahoo.com](mailto:nikijohnson29@yahoo.com) or 917-617-1296.*

## ADDRESSING HUNGER

Hunger is on the rise in many households throughout the Twin Cities. You are invited to help by writing a check out to Grace in support of **Community Emergency Service**. CES provides high-quality direct service to people in need through direct aid relief, advocacy, referral, guidance and prayer support, if desired. CES seeks to strengthen families and individuals with the goal of moving them beyond crisis to financial stability, as well as emotional health, personal growth and spiritual depth. The Grace community has been a strong supporter of this ministry for many years.

You may send your check to Grace with "CES" in the memo line, and funds will be forwarded. Check out CES's website if you'd like to learn more about their mission: <https://cesmn.org>

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Our new garden **FREE LITTLE PANTRY** is being used...if you'd like to contribute by providing items for re-stocking, you can bring these to Grace on Wednesdays (contact Heidi in advance at [cyf@graceattheu.org](mailto:cyf@graceattheu.org) if you plan to come in) — other times may be available. Items that seem to be in demand: granola bars, personal hygiene items, and ready-to-eat items.

## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Brian Neurauter	1
Margaret Pennings	1
Jensen Joyce	3
Kelle Knotek	3
Nika Alabi	5
Robb Benson-Ernst	5
Nathanael Engh	6
Karen Van Norman	7
Maren Stjernholm	8
Dan Schnobrich	9
Thomas Wehrman	9
Lois Quam	10
Kara Wolf	10
Kristin Bauck	11
Susan Bratt	11
Henry Rector	11
Kaylee Anderson	12
Martha Franke	12
Keith Hawkinson	13
Nova Henry	13
Lisa Sanders	14
Karen Sneed	15
Michaela Tangen	17
Ralph Faville	18
Clara Michlitsch	18
Sam Anklesaria	21
Nancy Baker	21
Patty Lee	22
Steve Abenth	24
Grace Pennings Guentner	26
Mariann Tiblin	26
Jerry Christensen	27
Jane Delehanty	28
Becky Sun	28
Peggy Anderson-Mann	29
Sophie Evenson	31
Anne Tuttle	31

## NURSE'S NOTE



### COVID-19 Vaccine: Myth vs Fact

(Sources: Mayo Clinic News Network, December 15, 2020; CDC, December 13, 2020)

We have had our eyes, ears and hearts ready to hear that the COVID-19 Vaccine was approved. And now the first and probably second vaccines are being rolled out and actual shots are going into arms! The excitement is palpable, and the pictures are inspiring tears of joy. From my perspective, this is the very small light at the end of a very dark tunnel, but it definitely a light! The vaccine is perhaps the best hope we have to combat COVID-19. Combined with the precautions we all know by heart – wear a mask, social distance, avoid crowds and stay home if you are sick – life has a chance to approach whatever normal will be.

There has been copious amounts of media about the vaccine. Here are some facts to consider.

#### 1. COVID-19 vaccines will not give you COVID-19.

None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in development in the US use the live virus that causes COVID-19. The goal for all of these vaccines is to teach our immune systems how to recognize, respond and fight off the COVID-19 virus. There may be a few symptoms while our bodies figure out how to fight. It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity (antibody immune response). A person could be infected with the virus just before or after the vaccination and get sick because the vaccine has not had enough time to develop immunity. (NOTE: 2 shots are needed to be given 17 -21 days apart).

#### 2. COVID-19 vaccines will not cause you to test positive on COVID-19 viral tests.

Vaccines in clinical trials in the US won't cause you to test positive on viral tests, which are used to see if you have a current infection. If your body develops an immune response, there is a possibility that you may test positive on some antibody tests.

Antibody tests indicate that you had a previous infection and may have some level of protection against the virus.

#### 3. People who have gotten sick with COVID-19 may still benefit from being vaccinated.

Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that re-infection with COVID-19 is possible, people may be advised to get a COVID-19 vaccine even if they have already been sick with COVID-19. We do not know how long we are protected after being sick with the COVID-19 virus. Having the infection causes natural immunity and varies between individuals. Some evidence indicates that natural immunity may not last very long. We still do not know how long immunity from being vaccinated will last until more data is gathered.

**4. Getting vaccinated can help prevent getting sick with COVID-19.**

There is no way to predict how sick you will get from COVID-19, you only have a few symptoms, get very ill or even die (300,00 deaths as of this writing). If you do get infected, you may spread the infection to family, friends or strangers. The COVID-19 vaccination helps protect you and those around you by creating an antibody without having to experience the infection.

**5. Are there severe side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine?**

There are short-term mild or moderate vaccine reactions that resolve without complications (pain or swelling at the injection site, and/or you could experience fever, chill, tiredness or headache which should subside within a few days.) Some helpful tips include applying a clean, cool wet washcloth over the injection site and remember to move your arm around. To reduce body discomfort, drink plenty of fluids and dress lightly). Contact your healthcare provider if redness at the site becomes larger after 24 hours or if the side effects are worrying you and do not seem to go away in a few days. Remember, the side effects may feel like the flu and even effect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days.

You can find more information about the COVID-19 vaccine through the Minnesota Department of Health, Mayo Clinic News Network or the CDC. Your healthcare provider is always a good source of information

**“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble. Therefore we will fear not.” Psalm 46 1-2**

Take care, stay well, blessings,  
—Nurse Cheryl

**A NOTE ABOUT SCAMS**

Scams seem to be popping up everywhere: emails, text messages, phone calls...sometimes it can be difficult to tell if a request is legitimate and coming from the person it claims to be coming from.

**\*\*\*Our pastors will NOT EVER text or email individuals to solicit money or other kinds of donations.\*\*\***

*In addition, any requests for money coming directly from a congregation member to you personally should be checked out with one of our pastors.*

**If you receive an email or text message that appears to be coming from a pastor — perhaps asking you to “do a favor” or “help me out with something” and directing you to purchase gift cards or forward money — DO NOT REPLY or click on any links.** You may let someone on staff know. You can "block the caller" and delete the text, or report the email as spam. You can also visit this to learn more about what to do: [How to recognize and report spam text messages](#)

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

<i>Adult Education</i>	Nancy Laskaris
<i>Archives &amp; History</i>	Gordon Folke
<i>Children &amp; Youth</i>	Jenny Odden
<i>Congregational Life</i>	Frieda von Qualen
<i>Hawkinson Fund</i>	Jared Oasheim & Stan Jacobson
<i>Outreach</i>	Susan Wooten
<i>Property</i>	Rolf Carlsen
<i>Sunday Service Coordinator</i>	Rose Carlsen
<i>Social Justice Coordinator</i>	Anita Hill
<i>Stewardship</i>	
<i>Worship and Music</i>	David Grandall
<i>Leadership Development</i>	Jean Stilwell, David Anderson, Sara Sneed Miller

**GRACE COUNCIL MEMBERS**

<i>President</i>	Stan Olson
<i>Vice President</i>	Drew Schwab
<i>Vice President</i>	Nicole Johnson
<i>Treasurer</i>	John Edmundson
<i>Secretary</i>	Lisa Linnell
<i>Council-at-Large</i>	Kirsten Bansen Weigle
<i>Council-at-Large</i>	Becky Hunter
<i>Council-at-Large</i>	Joe Carlson

**Grace University Lutheran Church**

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[info@graceattheu.org](mailto:info@graceattheu.org)



Lutheran Campus  
Ministry

*\*Address service requested\**

**STATEMENT of MISSION**

*The primary mission of Grace University Lutheran Church is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ as an instrument of God's reconciling love in the world. We do this so that reconciliation with God may become a reality for all. (2 Corinthians 5:18-21)*

**STATEMENT of AFFIRMATION**

*Grace University Lutheran Church is a spiritual community that celebrates the gifts of God that empower us to engage in the struggles of life, to care for each other, and to serve Christ where we work and live. Grace is a Reconciling-in-Christ congregation. We welcome the participation of people of all ages, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities, educational backgrounds, and economic conditions—all who want to join in community to honor God and be of service to people.*

**OFFICE/BUILDING HOURS**

Temporarily suspended during the pandemic

**THE PEOPLE of GRACE**

*Ministers* The Grace Community

**Grace Staff**

- Mary Halvorson* Co-Pastor, [pastormary@graceattheu.org](mailto:pastormary@graceattheu.org)
- Dan Garnaas* Co-Pastor, [pastordan@graceattheu.org](mailto:pastordan@graceattheu.org)
- Heidi Johnson McAllister* Director of Faith Formation  
and Member Engagement, [cyf@gracattheu.org](mailto:cyf@gracattheu.org)
- Jill Abenth* Office Manager, [info@graceattheu.org](mailto:info@graceattheu.org)
- Stephen Self* Organist and Choir Director, [music@graceattheu.org](mailto:music@graceattheu.org)
- Joan Christensen* Pianist, [jerjoanchriste@hotmail.com](mailto:jerjoanchriste@hotmail.com)
- David Anderson* Bookkeeper & Financial Secretary, [akro davidmn@gmail.com](mailto:akro davidmn@gmail.com)
- Cheryl Lanigan* Faith Community Nurse, [nurse@graceattheu.org](mailto:nurse@graceattheu.org)
- Mechawit Simmons* Custodian
- Mike Lanigan* Sunday Attendant
- Jared Steven Coffin* Composer in Residence

**Volunteer Staff**

- Stefan Wolf* Second Sunday Singing Director, [stefanjwolf@gmail.com](mailto:stefanjwolf@gmail.com)
- Janelle Bussert* Keyboard Choir Director, [jbussert2@aol.com](mailto:jbussert2@aol.com)
- Patti Regan* Handbell Choir Director, [regan.patti@gmail.com](mailto:regan.patti@gmail.com)
- Carolyn Winters Folke* Offering Counting Coordinator, [cbwf40@gmail.com](mailto:cbwf40@gmail.com)

**Lutheran Campus Ministry Staff**

- Kate Reuer Welton* Lutheran Campus Pastor, [pastorkate@umnlutheran.org](mailto:pastorkate@umnlutheran.org)
- Michelle Greene* Administrative & Development Assistant, [info@umnlutheran.org](mailto:info@umnlutheran.org)
- Dana Rademacher Hansen* Program Associate, [dana@umnlutheran.org](mailto:dana@umnlutheran.org)
- Ben Cox* St. Paul Outreach Intern, [ben@umnlutheran.org](mailto:ben@umnlutheran.org)
- Jenna Van Holtum* Student Admin & Development Intern, [jenna@umnlutheran.org](mailto:jenna@umnlutheran.org)

**Grace Council Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, November 11, 2020 – 6:30-8:00 PM,**  
by Zoom technology

**Attending:** Pastor Mary Halvorson, Stan Olson, Kirsten Weigle, Becky Hunter, John Edmundson, Niki Johnson, Joe Carlson, Drew Schwab

**Not attending:** Pastor Dan Garnaas

**Call to Order by Stan at 6:33**

**Opening Word – Stan**

**October Council Minutes (Lisa)**

***Action:** Motion to approve minutes as distributed. Motion by Lisa, second by Joe. Motion approved.*

**October Financial Reports (John)**

No significant changes compared to previous months.

***Action:** Motion to approve financial reports as distributed. Motion by John, second by Becky. Motion approved.*

**Review First Draft of the 2021 budget (John)**

Impacts of COVID-19 on the draft budget: projected deficit and projected lower pledge income. Important to remember that some may be giving less because of the pandemic but sacrificing more.

Identifiabiles have stayed the same, but the LuAnn Muller bequest drops from \$15,000 to \$10,000 in the next budget year, per the schedule for the use of this gift.

Questions from the Council about how the garage contract is structured.

Discussion of how new pastors' salary and benefits will affect the budget (e.g., base rate of pay based on experience compared to current pastors, impact of health care benefits for pastors + potential family members.)

Faith Community Nurse continues to be funded for three years using a portion of the LuAnn Muller bequest.

Insurance for upcoming year (Drew): Renewal projected to be \$15,615 for next year.

Discussion of cost-of-living adjustments for pastoral and non-pastoral staff.

Question about expenses that may be incurred by the Call Committee. \$500 added to the draft budget for those expenses.

**Pastors' Reports (Pastor Mary)**

Grace University is on its way: classes, discussions, homework. People are connecting and learning. Dan is working on the winter semester offerings.

Staying the course, preparing for Advent and Christmas, thinking about what that time will be like. Pondering what we can do prayer- and worship-wise.

Starting a weekly evening prayer service November 19.

**Building Task Force Update (Pastor Mary, for Pastor Dan)**

Building Committee is meeting again Monday, November 16. Very disheartening meeting with the architects: the budget being projected is way above what Grace is trying to hold itself to. Labor and materials have skyrocketed. Continue to have great confidence in the experience, wisdom, and dedication of Building Committee.

**Policies & practices during the pandemic – review as needed (Council)**

We reflect on our practices every month, continue to operate without written policies because the situation is so fluid.

**First review of draft Personnel Policies document – (Niki)**

Try to document things we are already doing. Benchmarked other congregations. This is a policy, not an employee handbook. Will form a personnel committee at some point.

Suggested change: from “maternity/paternity” to “parental leave.” Research if we might be able to be more generous than the Synod guidelines.

Suggested change: from “sick leave” to “sick and safe leave.”

Add a signature line; when the policy is changed, everyone is asked to review and sign the new policy.

Add “review personnel policy” to the list of annual polices to review.

**Continuing Resolution recommended by the Synod staff (Stan)**

***Action:** Motion to adopt Continuing Resolution C10.03.A20 This congregation may hold meetings by remote communication, including electronically and by telephone conference, as long as there is an opportunity for simultaneous communication. Notice*

*of all meetings may be provided electronically. Motion by Drew, second by John. Motion approved.*

**Other Business**

None

Pastor Mary left at 7:41pm in advance of the Pastoral Transition Update discussion, per our practice of proceeding with the call process.

**Pastoral Transition Update**

Discussion of the next steps in selection of call committee. Selection will be made by online voting of the council.

Discussion about the size and composition of the call committee. Proposed revised Constitution says 6-8 voting members.

Suggestion to tape the call committee interviews in case some people cannot attend.

**Adjourn**

*Action: Motion to adjourn. Motion by Becky, second by Drew. Motion approved. Adjourned at 8:03pm.*