



the Grace Messenger

A monthly publication of Grace University Lutheran Church
MAY 2021 — VOLUME 118 — ISSUE 5

PASTOR'S PAGE

What does one write for the final Pastors' Page after 28 years of shared ministry? We found an answer while emptying our filing cabinets (with way too many manila folders to count!) The folders belie the pre-laptop and internet era of our first years at Grace. Going through notes, letters and cards, fliers, posters, newspaper articles, committee minutes, grant proposals, information on everything from funeral planning to young adults, healing ministry to conscientious objectors, has us traveling back in time. The events, ministry experimenting, people, deaths, baptisms, weddings, actions, changes, growth, historic events, staff, building, expanding, shared life together, is a bit overwhelming. "Oh yeah, that happened. Oh, I remember when we did that. I remember her funeral..."

In one manila folder Mary found a paper written by Lisa Johnson, a University of Minnesota student. It was written before 2005 when the addition was built. Lisa dropped her paper at the church with this note: *I wrote this for a class...the assignment was to write about a place we consider "essential". I wanted you to have a copy and hope you enjoy it as I have enjoyed finding Grace!*

Lisa distills in words and images what we hope our ministry reflected all these years, and what we experienced of the Grace community and its embrace of hospitality.

We share Lisa's first-person account with you. We will not attempt to improve or mirror her reflections, because we couldn't. We are grateful to Lisa for her confirmation and blessing of our ministry together. Lisa Johnson, if you ever see this newsletter, please contact Grace and let us know where your journey has taken you since graduation!

Enjoy this beautiful account,
Pastors Mary and Dan

Lisa Johnson
Essential Place



A Cross in the Path

The wind hits her, harsh and brutal, the moment she steps outside of the coffee shop and onto the corner of Huron and Washington. The warmth she had just consumed was the only thing left to combat the cold outside, but there didn't seem to be anything to alleviate the dread she

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in MAY

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**The deadline for
submissions to the
JUNE Grace Messenger is
MONDAY, MAY 17.**



Graceattheu.org

[Grace University Lutheran
Church Facebook Page](#)

[Grace University Families on
Facebook](#)

[Grace University YouTube
Channel](#)

WORSHIP *in* MAY

We worship apart, but together. Worship information is emailed on Saturdays at 5 pm and is also 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, May 2

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Congregational Meeting at 11:30 am (see p. 3)

Acts 8:26-40 *Philip teaches and baptizes an Ethiopian*

Psalms 22:25-31

1 John 4:7-21 *God's love perfected in love for one another*

John 15:1-8 *Christ the vine*

Sunday, May 9

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Table of Mercy Setting

Acts 10:44-48 *The Spirit poured out on the Gentiles*

Psalms 98

1 John 5:1-6 *The victory of faith*

John 15:9-17 *Christ the friend and lover*

Sunday, May 16

Seventh Sunday of Easter

Live Worship at 10:30 am via Zoom with Holy

Communion (see p. 5 for connection info)

Pastors Mary and Dan's Final Worship at Grace

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26 *Matthias added to the apostles*

Psalms 1

1 John 5:9-13 *Life in the Son of God*

John 17:6-19 *Christ's prayer for his disciples*

Sunday, May 23

Day of Pentecost

Acts 2:1-21 *Filled with the Spirit to tell God's deeds*

Psalms 104:24-34, 35b

Romans 8:22-27 *Praying with the Spirit*

John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15 *Christ sends the Spirit of truth*

Sunday, May 30

Holy Trinity Sunday

Pre-recorded worship provided by the Minneapolis Area

Synod staff

Isaiah 6:1-8 *Isaiah's vision and call*

Psalms 29

Romans 8:12-17 *Living by the Spirit*

John 3:1-17 *Entering the reign of God through water and the Spirit*

Pastor's Page continued...

felt inside about the exam she had studied for all night. Sometimes life at the University seemed a bit too overwhelming. She felt laden with the pressures of maintaining good grades while at the same time trying hard to stay afloat as a happy little fish in such a big sea. She walked back towards the dorms for some breakfast, each step taken with a heavy heart and hung head. An airplane overhead caused her to chance a glance skyward; as her eyes traveled up, they stopped on something that seemed to pierce the grey sky and likewise the drear of her soul. They swept over the cross atop Grace University Lutheran Church. This is the first time she has noticed this little building and also the first time in a week that something within her began to put things into perspective.

He had to go out in the fresh air for a while; hospitals had never really been his thing. All of the sickness, the hustle and bustle, down to the very smell — he couldn't tolerate it any longer. The illness of his own child was enough suffering to bear. Once through the revolving doors, he found himself standing in between two intimating buildings and not in the open as he'd hoped. So he walked down towards the parking ramp where they'd parked their old Honda, taking in the sights around him. When he spotted the dark brick church he was surprised he had missed it before. His foreign, impersonal surroundings became a little more comfortable, and he decided to climb the twelve front steps and go inside.

Nested amidst the modern Moos Medical Towers of the University of Minnesota Hospital and across the street from a cluster of college dorms, this little church stakes its claim of property. It's a building with an obvious past and history in this ironic location, yet at the same time it's the very location which makes this place so important and extraordinary. One couldn't ask for a more convenient "oasis of peace" to cater to this stress-producing college and hospital community. This is precisely what causes me to label this church as essential; the fact that it's important structurally because of its age, but more so that it represents a place needed by the community.

Pastor's Page continued on p. 3...

Pastor's Page continued...

As in the two analogies, this is a building which may not catch the eye the first time around. It's size, for one, does nothing to distinguish itself from the looming buildings directly behind. But there's such a strong feeling of belonging, like it has been there forever and will remain as such, that causes one to almost overlook its presence. It lends a feel of small-town wholeness through its dark brick, seemingly English countryside style. There's something quite beckoning about the steep steps that lead up to the big wooden doors, as if they propose a challenge to the person on the sidewalk below to make the climb and enter this "realm of grace." Once inside, you find yourself in a miniature foyer that allows for the transition from the outside world to the inside sanctuary. One can see the cement floor and dark wood pews, but yet they are not cold and sinister; the walls of the sanctuary are lined with two levels of windows stained muted shades of golden, lending a peaceful glow to the worship area that permeates better than the brightest of lights. Suspended from the vaulted ceiling of strong, dark wooden beams are wrought iron hanging sconces, also casting that yellow hue of comfort. Up front the wall is plain — there's nothing ornate about it. This hints that this is indeed a place of worship and not glamour, a house of God and not affluence, lessening intimidation. The entire scene seems to convey a message of casualness and invitation.

A function of church is fellowship in Christ, and this particular church has extra responsibility, brought largely by its location, to unite strangers. This is where the "building" takes the back burner to the people that run it: its pastors and congregation. Sunday mornings are a day of action at this otherwise quiet place. Families, couples, elderly people all file in and settle themselves in the pews. Above the quiet murmur of conversation and bubbling of children rises a beautiful piano prelude. At the beginning of the services I have attended, the first sentence uttered by the pastor is one of welcome to the visitors, and specifically those from the hospital and the University. Immediately concerns of the unfamiliar vanish and you begin to feel part of the occasion. There's always a portion of the service reserved for announcements of the church's activities and updates on the needs and concerns of the congregation. At this time the pastor steps down among the people and holds almost a conversation with us; people contribute information and the pastor addresses them by name; laughter is exchanged over humorous comments; compassion for one another is evident. The grand finale is the manner in which everyone remains

seated during the pianists' postlude and applauds her performance upon its completion, a demonstration of respect that I haven't seen in my home church. As we all file out, the pastor stands at the exit to greet everyone and shake their hands. There is a very real sense of community in the sanctuary.

The entire environment of this church is unique. Its location makes it invaluable, as the people that are apt to attend are likely seeking a sense of belonging or a peaceful retreat. The welcoming disposition of both the building and its people actually make you feel a part of something...and that something is different for everyone. One person may feel a part of the past with the "old" feel of the place; another may feel a part of the others that are there, a social fulfillment; the next may feel a part of his or her faith; and one may once again learn to feel that part of him or herself that got lost somewhere "outside." All of these provisions are, by me, considered essential...necessary for the happiness of that particular individual. Any place that can make this contribution must be just as essential as the emotions it is capable of evoking.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

**Sunday, May 2 at 11:30 am
via Zoom**

Please plan to attend our spring congregational meeting, when we elect council members and committee chairs for the coming year and discuss other important updates. Your voice is important in our mission and leadership decisions!

Connection information:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87395451970?pwd=RFZqUUUpPcmpGWTRQV2xpbFQ0UE4vUT09>

Meeting ID: 873 9545 1970

Passcode: 396975

Celebrating Our Pastors



THANK YOU AND FAREWELL EVENT

Saturday, May 15, 7:00pm

Join us on Zoom for an evening of music, good humor, and tons of gratitude and love for Pastors Dan and Mary. To make it fun and lively, plan to:

- come in special attire — a fancy or funny hat, your Sunday best, the color of your favorite church season, whatever you wish
- join with a computer/laptop/tablet if possible for best viewing
- interact online during the event — expect polls and chat questions to respond to
- make a big THANK YOU sign to hold up on cue during the program
- choose a fun Zoom background or hang something up behind you on the wall to make Dan and Mary smile

Connection for the celebration:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83977471002?pwd=WTRxNjdQODdRSWI5eDZBZU5pTVlKZz09>

Meeting ID: 839 7747 1002

Passcode: DanMary

Questions about the May 15 program? Contact Liz Andress, liz@solbrack.com.

Note: The program will be recorded and accessible afterwards.

GOOD GRIEF NOTES

Grace at a Threshold

To draw on a word from poet and theologian John O'Donohue, we at Grace find ourselves at a *threshold*.* With the retirement of beloved pastors, we are crossing over into a new time, leaving a familiar time. It is a time of blessing what is arriving while honoring what is ending. Crossing a threshold demands courage and trust in what is emerging.

This is not the typical way we say goodbye to pastors at the end of a long and valued tenure at a congregation! Typically, there are *in-person* gatherings, services, celebrations. While we are getting closer to the time we can gather in the same space again, that time isn't here yet.

This pandemic has not only put roadblocks in ways we would typically say goodbye, it has also stretched out the process. This brings both gifts and complexity, sometimes making it hard to know what and when to grieve. One might say we're experiencing what Pauline Boss calls *ambiguous loss*.** Our pastors are here but physically absent from us—and we from each other—these last many months. There are layers of loss below the obvious ones, layers that are harder to recognize or validate.

Grief and gratitude can be closely intertwined in a goodbye. Peace be to each one of us in this time of individually pausing, exploring, and honoring what this relationship has meant in ways unique to each individual or family. Peace as we also gather, while apart, to give thanks to our pastors in their leave-taking from this community, and to offer blessing to one another at this threshold time.

Our faith tradition is rooted in blessing — *May the Lord bless you and keep you...and give you peace*. Grace departures are marked by the ritual of our familiar blessing — *May the longtime sun shine upon you....* As we sing this to Pastors Dan and Mary, we also sing to one another — as we all embark on a new journey anchored in blessing.

—**Your Grace Companions in Good Grief**

*Here is Krista Tippett's 2008 interview with John O'Donohue, [The Inner Landscape of Beauty](#). **Here is Krista Tippett's 2020 interview with Pauline Boss, [Living the Questions](#), on the topic of ambiguous loss related to the pandemic.

O God,
you have called your servants
to ventures of which we cannot see the ending,
by paths as yet untrodden,
through perils unknown.
Give us faith to go out with good courage,
not knowing where we go,
but only that your hand is leading us
and your love supporting us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Evangelical Lutheran Worship, p. 317

COUNCIL UPDATE *for the* CONGREGATION

Worship, learning, service, and fellowship are all continuing with faithful energy at Grace, and the congregation continues to thrive amid God's many blessings. Thank you to the many who are at work on all this. Our shared mission continues! That's the most important update, of course. I also want to give you a specific updates on aspects of our shared life.

Saying "Thank You!" and "Farewell": Pastor Dan and Pastor Mary's final Sunday as our pastors will be May 16. Worship via Zoom will be at 10:30—a festive service with the two of them sharing the pulpit. On Saturday, May 15, 7:00, via Zoom we will have a celebration party for Mary and Dan with good memories and much fun. Details about many aspects of both these (virtual) occasions have been and will be shared with you.

Calling New Pastors: Our call committee is hard at work. Chair Patty Lee reports that the committee will receive candidate names from the synod staff at a meeting the first week in May and will begin interviewing soon thereafter. We understand that the list will include some fifteen pastors who have expressed interest and/or have been recommended by our members or by the synod staff.

Naming an Interim Pastor: The council is responsible for appointing an interim pastor. We hope to have the appointment made by mid-May to facilitate transition conversations with our present pastors and with other staff members and leaders. We expect the interim period to extend into early fall, at least.

Pastor Mary and Pastor Dan have made arrangements for worship leadership during the last two weeks of May, when they'll be on vacation. We will also identify people to offer pastoral coverage during those weeks and during any additional gap before the interim pastor begins. You can contact the church office or me with questions or suggestions.

Planning for Gathering: In-person gatherings will be suspended into June, at least. The council, the interim pastor, other staff, and our Grace health professional task force will continue to listen to the advice of synod staff and government officials.

We hope that physical gathering can begin again during the summer, perhaps outdoors first. In that hope, a congregation picnic is planned for the evening of August 15 at Central Park in Roseville. Pastors Dan and Mary have agreed to our suggestion that they return for the picnic if it can be held.

The current projections and recommendations suggest that by September the people of Grace and our many visitors may be able to worship and gather again in our wonderful building.

Roof Replacement: A contractor has been selected for replacing the roof over the sanctuary. They plan to begin work yet this spring.

FAREWELL WORSHIP

Sunday, May 16 — 10:30 am

We'll Gather Live via Zoom

Please join us for Pastors Mary and Dan's final worship service at Grace. This service will include Holy Communion — prepare at home by gathering bread and wine or grape juice. (The video will be uploaded to YouTube post-service for those who are unable to attend.)

Details for connecting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85633072499?pwd=WnVub1kvSjNacHlxdmNibUZoeGY5Zz09>

Meeting ID: 856 3307 2499

Passcode: 986008

If you prefer to call in to this Zoom gathering using your touchtone phone, please contact Jill in the office for instructions.

Congregational Meeting: The regular spring meeting of the congregation will be at 11:30, Sunday, May 2, by zoom technology. The spring meeting includes most of our elections and will, of course, include updates on many things in this transition time.

Please pray often for the whole congregation and its mission. Pray often for Lutheran Campus Ministry and our other partners. Pray often for each person on our staff and for our other servant leaders. I trust you will continue to offer your gracious support to these leaders and our work as a congregation. Present and future, we need your partnership and are grateful for it!

In Christ, Stan Olson, President,
for the Council

MAY BIRTHDAYS

Karin Hawkinson	1
Stefan Wolf	1
Wanda Alexander	2
Tim Anderson	3
Anna Bejarin	3
Alfred Hannemann	4
Isabella Koukkari-Mason	5
Zach Laskaris	6
William Browne	9
Kirsten Bansen Weigle	10
Scott Iwen	10
Leona Hayden	11
Kristen Thompson-Eckstrom	11
Krista Nelson	12
Nellie Warren	12
Eric Ehler	14
Mabel Schnobrich	15
Carina Anderson	17
Erik Odden	17
Haley Carlsen	19
Dan Newman	19
Dan Perucco	19
Jean Doane	21
Heidi Johnson McAllister	21
Joan Christensen	22
Poppy Higgins	24
Leo Laska	24
Elsa Warren	25
Marc Weigle	25
Leah Foecke	26
Meredith Severtson	26
Florence Lange	28
Barb Thomasson	28
Sam Chadwick	29
Theo Ronken	29
Theo Wilson	29
Jon Buuck	31



SEEKING GRADUATE INFORMATION

Submit information to the office by Monday, May 17

Some of you (or your kids) are graduating this spring...will you tell us who you are? High school, college or university, graduate school, PhD program...we'd like to know about it! Please contact Jill in the office to say who is graduating, in what program from what school, if there's a near-future plan post-graduation (no pressure) and we'll share the news in our June/July newsletter. info@graceattheu.org

EASTER SEASON DAILY DEVOTIONALS

You are invited to contribute photos to this season's Day by Day with Grace emailed devotions!

Please send photographs that show "new life" to Jill in the office (info@graceattheu.org). *SEEKING*: quality photographs (Jill may edit and crop as needed) that you or a family member have taken, jpg or png file, and if a human is included in the composition, please gain their permission for it to be used. Indicate in the subject line of your email "New Life Photo".

NURSE'S NOTE



Healthy Mind Initiative (HMI)

(Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service 3/12/2019)
National Institute of Health

Note: This text is from the above sources.

Minority Focus

Mental illness is a common health challenge in the United States. In minority populations, mental illness is often misunderstood and stigmatized. Stereotyped as the model minority, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) are seen as academically gifted and successful. However, they often suffer with mental illness, with suicide being the leading cause of death for AAPI adolescents 12–19 years old.

The mission of the Healthy Mind Initiative (HMI) is to increase mental health awareness and promote suicide prevention in AAPI adolescents. Launched in 2018, HMI is a collaborative effort among the U.S. Public Health Service, federal and county government partners, and AAPI community organizations and leadership. It highlights the importance of mental health literacy by educating about mental illness, substance misuse, and suicide among AAPI youth, with a focus on prevention and early detection.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for children between the ages of 10–24 years old, accounting for 17.6% of deaths in this age group.¹ The American Academy of Pediatrics recently updated their guidelines to include universal screening for adolescent depression (youth 12 years of age and older).² According to the 2016 National

Nurse's Note continued...

Survey on Drug Use and Health, one in eight youth ages 12–17 years old has had a major depressive episode in the past year, with 70% of them having severe impairment.^{3,4}

For AAPI youth the numbers are even worse with a suicide rate of greater than 21% - 27% compared to other minority youth. The Model Minority Myth is a stereotype that portrays all Asian Americans as academically gifted and successful. This myth wrongly portrays AAPIs as a prosperous group who have secured economic and educational success, have fewer health problems than the overall population, and do not need public assistance. In reality, AAPIs are a very heterogenous group with immigration from more than 30 different countries and ethnic groups, hundreds of languages and unique dialects, and varying degrees of economic and academic success.

Many AAPIs face multiple challenges, including lack of health insurance, limited English proficiency, difficulty of acculturation and lower socioeconomic status. Less than half of AAPIs would seek help for their emotional or mental health concerns than their white counterparts.⁶ AAPIs tend to dismiss, psychosomatize, deny or neglect their depressive symptoms for different reasons, such as different conceptualizations of mental health and illness or avoiding family shame.

Parental warmth, family cohesion, and strong intergenerational relationships can help AAPI adolescents in expressing experiences with bullying and minimizing internalizing issues with immigrant parents, teachers, or the education system.⁷ It is critical for the AAPI community to continually strengthen family/parenting skills, build resiliency, and reduce risks for adolescent anxiety and

depression. Safe, supportive, and nurturing relationships are important to children. Strong and positive self-esteem is extremely vital and can be associated with reduced risk of depression.

There is an urgent need to improve the mental well-being of future AAPI generations. Learning how to cope with various stressors that life throws at them, work productively and fruitfully, and contribute to their community and society are key for the younger AAPI generations to actualize the great potential that lies within them. It is equally important to reduce the stigma about mental health among the AAPI community and encourage seeking help and counseling when needed. We have a lot of work to do.

Parents, teachers and friends need to know the signs of anxiety and depression, and “act early.” The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers several suggestions on their [Children’s Mental Health website](#).

Contact Cheryl for references (noted by footnote numbers in superscript) on this article: nurse@graceattheu.org

Matthew 19:14 — Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

God’s Blessings to each of you,
Nurse Cheryl

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

<i>Adult Education</i>	Nancy Laskaris
<i>Archives & History</i>	Gordon Folke
<i>Children & 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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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
- Dan Garnaas* Co-Pastor, pastordan@graceattheu.org
- Heidi Johnson McAllister* Director of Faith Formation and Member Engagement, cyf@gracattheu.org
- Jill Abenth* Office Manager, info@graceattheu.org
- Stephen Self* Organist and Choir Director, music@graceattheu.org
- Joan Christensen* Pianist, jerjoanchriste@hotmail.com
- David Anderson* Bookkeeper & Financial Secretary, akro davidmn@gmail.com
- Cheryl Lanigan* Faith Community Nurse, 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
- Janelle Bussert* Keyboard Choir Director, jbussert2@aol.com
- Patti Regan* Handbell Choir Director, regan.patti@gmail.com
- Carolyn Winters Folke* Offering Counting Coordinator, cbwf40@gmail.com

Lutheran Campus Ministry Staff

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

Grace Council Meeting Minutes**Wednesday, March 10, 2021 – 6:30-8:00 PM** by Zoom

Attending: Pastor Mary, Pastor Dan, Stan Olson, Becky Hunter, Niki Johnson, Joe Carlson, Kirsten Bansen Weigle, Lisa Linnell

Not attending: Drew Schwab

Call to Order by Stan at 6:31pm**Building Matters**

Because Rolf Carlsen can only be with us for the first fifteen minutes, these items are placed at the beginning of our agenda.

- a) Roof replacement contract and funding – Rolf
- b) Update on building enhancement – Rolf and Pr. Dan

Potential start in mid-May, finish by mid-July.

Action: Motion to authorize the executive committee to do any necessary negotiating and to authorize the president to sign an agreement with ADC for the sanctuary roof replacement project. Motion by Kirsten, second by Lisa. Motion approved.

Opening Word – Niki

Bryan Stevenson - Four Steps to a Better World

February Council Minutes – Lisa

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

Minutes of the February 28, 2021 Special Meeting of the Congregation

For review, no action needed

February Financial Reports – John

Discussion of dividing full-year pledges into equal payments across the year to show a more even flow of payments.

Discussed budget items of note.

Discussion of Children and Youth Education Committee over budget due to need to purchase materials for Sunday school in February. Expected to be over budget for the year. Discussion about whether the Committee's budget needs to be adjusted upwards if this is a perennial concern.

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

Discussion: Maintenance costs and future budgeting

Large expenses expected in the near future: \$2,586 for heat exchange unit repair; elevator repair has been completed but bill has not come yet. Expected we will go well over the total building maintenance budget for those two items. John recommends paying for these expenses from designated funds for Enduring Grace Fund, noting that the fund is designed to be used.

Action: Motion to authorize the transfer of funds from the Enduring Grace Maintenance Fund to cover the repair costs of repairs to the elevator and the heat exchange unit. Motion by Niki, second by Becky. Motion approved.

Council requests that the Finance Committee discuss a policy for the use of the fund, including eligible expenses. Maintenance is unpredictable. Should a maintenance reserve be established to pay for unexpected expenses? Discussion of how much money is appropriate to start the fund. Should it be a percentage of the total budget?

Action: Motion to authorize the establishment of a Maintenance Reserve fund using \$10,000 from Enduring Grace Maintenance Fund. This reserve would receive any budgeted maintenance dollars not spent in a given year and would be a source to supplement the budget when maintenance costs exceed the budget. Motion by Joe. Second by Kirsten. Motion approved.

Discussion: Procedures for handling pledges that are paid in advance.

Proposal to amortize pledges throughout the year so we don't have a spike in paid-in-full pledges at the beginning of the year. John is opposed to the proposal. Council can review the graph of incoming pledges monthly understand the dips and spikes that happen annually, plus it would be a lot of extra work for the bookkeeper to make income look more stable across the year. We have not had any problems under the current system. Council decided the change is not needed and is less work for the bookkeeper.

Reports – Pastor Dan and Pastor Mary

Pastor Mary

- Busy with upcoming final retreat for ARC women, Bible study, book group, Easter, pastoral care. Moving into closure activities.
- Retreat participants: 150 (men and women)
- Internship update: Putting together proposal for 5-6 hours for Amy Chatelaine. Seminary and ELCA need to have criteria in place so Amy has a meaningful church-based experience. Candidacy Committee needs to approve. Need to put together a supervisory internship committee (all congregations need to have this for internships). Amy's internship would start in August.

Pastor Dan

- Grace University update: 170 participants across all the classes (some people take more than one).
- Building Committee met with the Miller Dunwiddie and Mortenson Construction to share one last time our dismay about the costs. Met with the University to keep them apprised of our thinking and plans. Building Committee met and agreed on the need for a pause, need to think about linking mission and building in light of all the changes we are undergoing (pastoral change, unrest, COVID).
- Pastor Kate and Pastor Dan will be writing to National LCM Inc., which is holding the \$800K for the building, to provide an update. Stan will take over the role of communicating with LCM Inc. for the congregation. Rolf, Anna, and Pastor Dan will be meeting with the LCM board to report on our progress.

- Building Committee is recommending that we not pursue a lease with the University until it is needed. Hope to send an official communication to the University before Pastors Dan & Mary leave. No need to continue paying for attorneys to work on this; wait until we have plans. Not sure if the University would enter into a lease if our plans are up in the air. Pause in construction planning will allow for an assessment of how needs have changed due to the pandemic (e.g., air exchange). Being out of the building might clarify our thinking about things that need to be done when we get back in the building.
- Mission of the Building Task Force is changing; the original charge is on pause. Volunteers should be asked their thoughts on continuing as we goes through this change to avoid frustration and burnout. The task force will meet once more before Pastor Dan and Pastor Mary leave, followed by quarterly check-ins.

Audit/financial review update – Stan

Terri Browne has agreed to serve as the chair of our newly elected Audit Committee. Other members are Neal Young and Jon Swenson Tellekson. A full external audit could cost more than \$10,000. Audit not mandated by the synod but is recommended for a church with a budget of our size. Moving forward on this would need to come back to the Council because of the unbudgeted cost. We could also consider a less expensive CPA review.

Policies & practices during the pandemic

Guidance from the Synod and the medical advisory team is to continue as is and not resume in-person services.

Pastor Dan and Pastor Mary exited the meeting, per custom to leave before discussion of pastoral transition.

Pastoral Transition

Farewell Plans (Kirsten) – Just starting with planning. Pastor Mary and Pastor Dan are not comfortable with the idea of delaying an in-person gathering but are open to returning for the summer picnic while an interim pastor is serving. Final worship is May 16. The Planning Committee is developing a Zoom party: planned program with music, speakers. Liz Andress is working with Jill to coordinate; Stan is leading conversation about a gift.

Next planning meeting is Monday, March 22, with a discussion of ideas. Potential to have videos or participation from people outside of Grace that have worked with Pastor Dan and Pastor Mary. Also considering a pandemic parade.

Asking for the Council's approval to move forward with an ask for a gift. This was approved.

Reminder – Bishop Ann Svennungsen will be leading a congregational meeting about the Ministry Site Profile on Sunday, March 14.

Other Business

None

Action: Motion to adjourn at 8:06. Motion by Niki, second by Becky. Motion approved.

SYNOD ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION on LINE 3 PIPELINE

Trevon Tellor and Liz Andress were Grace's representatives to the Minneapolis Area Synod Assembly on April 23-24. At the assembly, there was a resolution opposing the construction of the Line 3 pipeline. (Resolution: <https://mpls-synod.org/wp-content/uploads/RC2021-03-FINAL-Resolution-concerning-Line-3-construction.pdf>). The resolution passed. Tre spoke FOR the resolution. Here is his statement:

“My name is Trevon Tellor, I am a member of Grace University Lutheran Church. I support this resolution against Line 3, as for the last 4 months I have been going to action camps fighting this pipeline and I have seen firsthand what the destruction of the land looks like. Large excavators fill the air with diesel smoke that smells like death, you can feel the land cry out as they cut into it to dig their pipeline trenches. I have seen my Indigenous comrades grieve for the destruction of their land, but also fight back with energy I can only strive to have. I and many of my friends have gone to jail to protect both the water and our Indigenous siblings. We must pass this resolution if we are to believe that we are truly church. Where there is pain and suffering, the church must be there. Where the oppressed are struggling for the right to flourish, the church must be there. If the church wants to be serious about its sins of colonialism, then it will absolutely pass this resolution. If the synod and churchwide wants to be serious about anti-racism, it must address the environmental racism at play in it's own backyard here in Minnesota.

But this resolution is not the only step we should be making. I encourage the congregations here to think about how they can participate in pipeline resistance, whether that's donating money to groups like Honor the Earth and Giniw Collective, sending letters demanding that charges be dropped to judges and prosecutors, or even taking direct action against this pipeline. As Bonhoeffer said, “We are not to simply bandage the wounds of victims beneath the wheels of injustice, we are to drive a spoke into the wheel itself.”

If you want to learn more about the non-violent resistance being carried out at the construction site, contact Trevon Tellor at tellort@augsborg.edu or 612-710-2850.