

2023

ANNUAL REPORTS



FOR THE

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

January 21, 2024

**GRACE EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH**

SCHUYLKILL HAVEN, PA



Annual Report

Congregational Meeting Agenda January 21, 2024

9:30 AM Congregational Meeting – Sanctuary

Meeting called to order

Presentation of the minutes

Approval of Officers of the Ministry Council

Report from Ministry Council for 2024 Director Positions

Report of the Treasurer

Reports of the Commission Directors

Report of the Pastor

Old Business

New Business

- Review and adoption of the 2024 budget

Reading of the Minutes for approval

Adjournment

Closing Prayer

**Grace EC Church
Congregational Meeting
Sunday, January 22, 2023**

The annual Congregational Meeting of Grace EC Church was held at 9:30am on January 22, 2023 with Pastor Ted Rathman presiding.

Pastor Ted Rathman opened the meeting with prayer.

The minutes from the 2022 Congregational Meeting, along with commission reports, candidates for offices, Pastor's report and the proposed 2023 budget were distributed in the information packet. There were no congregational questions on presentation of 2022 minutes.

2023 Ministry Council One Year Term Officers:

Lay Delegate: Jill Kulbitsky
Alternate Lay Delegate: Dave Horst
Ministry Council President: John DeWitt
Ministry Council Vice-President: Ed Zipay
Church Treasurer: Diane O'Neill
Secretary: Rosanne Chesakis

All positions are one-year terms. Officers approved by motion of Jill Kulbitsky, Loretta Lewis.
Motion Passed.

2023 Ministry Council for Director positions:

Connectional Ministries: Courtney Fasnacht
Discipleship: Annette Holopirek
Fellowship & Service: Jodi Sitcosky
Operations: Gary Wehr
Worship: Judy Devlin
Outreach: vacant

~There is a vacancy in for the Outreach Director role currently.

~Tim Allison has stepped down for Connectional Ministries, Courtney Fasnacht has agreed to lead this ministry.

~2022 End of Year Commission Reports approved by motion of John Dewitt, Loretta Lewis.
Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Diane O'Neill

~no questions from congregation.

Motions to approve Treasurer's Report by Ed Zipay, Lynn Bodenber. Motion passed.

Senior Pastor Report: Ted Rathman

~Ted is grateful to all the leadership in the Ministry Council and the volunteers that help throughout the year.

~Dave and Andrea Sekellick are new members, their new memberships were missed in the report but will be added to the official report.

Associate Pastor Report: David Breznia

~ Every quarter our plan for 2023 is to take the youth out and participate in outings together.

Question from Lynn Bodenber: Will the youth be participating in a youth mission trip in 2023?

Yes, it will be in August. They will go to Washington DC .

Both Pastoral Reports were approved by motion from Judy Bodenber, Jodi Sitcosky. Motion passed.

Old Business: none

New Business:

2022 Budget total was discussed and reviewed by Pastor Ted.

~Ted discussed the in and out miscellaneous reimbursement line item on the report.

~ Ted discussed and clarified the memorial fund expense.

~\$257,400 actual income was brought into the church.

~An income graph displaying the last 6 years of income was presented. We have exceeded what we committed to accomplishing each year.

~Goal for 2022 was \$242,532. We exceeded that by \$10,600.

~We took on another pastoral salary in July of 2022. We've still been able to meet our goal.

2023 Budget Summary was presented and highlighted by Pastor Ted. Goal \$279,711- this is an increase but it is achievable.

~The goal of revenue for 2023 is a 12% increase due to the 2nd pastoral salary we have taken on.

~We increased the Fellowship Hall rental charge for 2023. We were well below others in the area. This is for people outside the church that rent the space. Non-profit organizations and members of the church are not charged for renting this space.

~Clarified the miscellaneous income. This was from the trust of Ruth Lishman. She passed this year and donated \$10,000 to the church this year. This is Gary Wehr's sister.

~Home Schooling for Him is the Co-op that began in Sept. 2022. These expenses are offset by a tuition fee that is charged to the participants of this Co-op.

~The health of our charge is related to God having our individual hearts. If God has your heart, he has your wallet too and you become more generous. Paul spoke about this in the Bible. Our resources and finances belong to God.

~Our goal is really only to increase the giving by \$5,426 more than 2022 to achieve our goal. Is God calling you to give more?

Budget questions were requested by Pastor Ted. No questions from the congregation.

Budget was approved by motion from Gene Voydik and Loretta Lewis. Congregation approved the budget.

Comments:

Ministry Council President, John Dewitt thanked David for joining the congregation in 2022 and serving our congregational family.

Annette Holopirek read 2023 minutes: Motion to approve the minutes by Dan Reed and Pam Voydik. Congregation approved the minutes.

Pastor Ted Rathman adjourned the meeting and closed the meeting with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette Holopirek

For Congregational Approval:

Ministry Council (One year terms)

- **Lay Delegate**
 - Jill Kulbitsky

- **Alternate Lay Delegate**
 - Dave Horst

- **MC President**
 - John Dewitt

- **MC Vice President**
 - Ed Zipay

- **Church Treasurer**
 - Diane O'Neill

- **Secretary**
 - Rosanne Chesakis

Directors approved by Ministry Council for 2024:

- Director of the Connectional Ministries Commission- **Courtney Fasnacht**
- Director of the Discipleship Commission- **Annette Holopirek**
- Director of the Fellowship and Service Commission- **Jodi Sitcosky**
- Director of the Operations Commission- **Gary Wehr**
- Director of the Outreach Commission- **Julie Wisner**
- Director of the Worship Commission- **Judy Devlin**



Grace Church

Christ + Church + Community

GRACE E.C. CHURCH 2024 BUDGET - For Congregation Approval

REVENUE

	2023 Actual	2023 Budget	2024 Budget
Tithes and Offerings	253,398.89	258,611	257,000
Property Use	2,810.00	6,000	3,000
Interest & Dividends	0.00	0	0
Fundraising & Misc. Income	10,771.78	11,000	1,000
Misc. Reimbursement (not income)	25,468.58	0	0
Memorial Fund	3,500.00	3,500	0
Homeschooling for Him	1,150.00	600	1,000
Total Brought In	297,099.25	279,711	
Less Misc. Reimbursement	25,468.58		
Budget Income	271,630.67	279,711	262,000

OTHER FUNDS

First Citizens Savings Acct.	200
Capital Fund	21,479
Stocks/Mutual Funds	\$34,887.00
Total	56,566

EXPENDITURES

	2023 Actual	2023 Budget	2024 Budget
<u>Pastoral Expenses</u>			
Pastor's Salary	47,828.64	47,828	51,687
Pension: Employer Contrib	4,320.00	4,320	4,560
Employer Flex Contribution	4,589.16	5,000	5,000
Hospitalization	14,995.82	14,975	15,101
Travel Reimbursement	1,392.75	2,000	2,000
Continuing Education	454.19	1,000	1,000
FICA- SS & Medicare	6,240.00	6,240	6,240
PA Tax	1,762.34	1,767	1,906
Local- HAB/EIT/LST	510.90	521	561
ECC Benefit Corp Service Fee	125.00	125	125
Pastoral Intern	28,259.28	36,582	
FICA- SS & Medicare	5,542.88	7,225	
PA Tax	1,078.08	1,404	
Local- HAB/EIT/LST	380.10	509	
Continuing Education	457.58	1,000	
Travel	682.36	2,000	
Total	118,619.08	132,496	88,180



Grace Church

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Grace EC Church 2022 Budget

EXPENDITURES

	2023 Actual	2023 Budget	2024 Budget
<u>Employee Expenses</u>			
Choir Director	3,624.77	3,624	3,878
Organist/Pianist	4,158.87	4,079	4,362
Housekeeper Salary	8,297.29	8,034	8,034
Secretary Salary	9,757.20	8,130	12,994
Disability & Workers Comp	266.00	700	700
FICA/ SS	7,790.66	4,148	5,091
PA Withholding	989.88	832	1,022
Local- HAB/EIT/LST	497.44	333	442
Payroll Processing	195.00	1,500	1,500
Employee Gifts	600.00	600	600
Total	36,177.11	31,980	38,623
<u>Operations Commission</u>			
<u>Operating Expenses</u>			
Church Oil	14,392.31	15,000	15,000
Church Electric	2,744.67	2,900	2,500
Church Water	375.05	400	250
Church Sewer	313.35	200	200
Church Phone & Internet	2,714.81	2,500	2,500
Parsonage Electric	2,618.52	3,100	2,700
Parsonage Water	606.13	650	550
Parsonage Sewer	557.05	600	500
Parsonage Phone	360.00	400	300
Parsonage Garbage	266.00	225	240
Church Repairs	3,297.68	8,000	6,000
Parsonage Expense	1,647.54	2,000	4,000
Church Building Insurance	7,431.00	6,300	6,800
Office Supplies	2,277.08	2,500	2,000
Church Supplies	0.00	200	200
Maintenance Contracts	82.07	460	200
Furnishings	571.98	800	1,000
Janitorial Supplies	1,043.95	1,000	1,000
Landscaping/Groundskeeping	234.26	500	500
Piano & Organ Maintenance	1,905.00	2,000	2,000
Snow Plowing	1,650.00	5,000	5,000
Mower Expense	1,172.24	1,500	1,500
Security/Safety	466.00	3,000	3,000
Ministry Funds	14,622.46	13,500	13,500
Total	61,349.15	72,735	71,440



Grace Church
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**GRACE E.C. CHURCH
2024 BUDGET**

EXPENDITURES

	2023 Actual	2023 Budget	2024 Budget
<u>Worship Commission</u>			
Guest Speakers & Programs	550.00	250	500
Multi-Media	4,671.19	1,500	5,000
Seasonal Decorations	23.74	100	150
Worship Supplies/Equipment	748.95	100	500
Music/Choir	0.00	1,000	1,000
Special Music	125.00	100	500
Total	6,118.88	3,050	7,650

Outreach Commission

Global Ministries Office	200.00	200	200
Stoltzfus Family	4,008.00	4,000	4,000
Anderson Family	4,008.00	4,000	4,000
Toy Family	4,008.00	4,000	4,000
Tomoyuki and Jessica Abe	4,008.00	4,000	4,000
Missionaries Christmas Gifts	1,000.00	1,000	1,000
Grace Outreach Ministries	1,484.02	2,000	3,000
Local/other Ministries	1,050.00	1,300	5,000
Global Giving Intl. Churches	3,000.00	2,000	4,000
Stone Ridge Benevolent Care	100.00	100	100
Student Aid	100.00	100	100
Manna Fund	100.00	100	100
Twin Pines	100.00	100	100
World Emergency	200.00	200	200
Benevolent Care	2,507.88	3,000	5,107
Total	25,873.90	26,100	34,907

Connectional Min. Commission

Printing & Promotions	0.00	1,000	1,000
Gifts	107.56	600	600
Guest Services	0	550	550
Servant Keepers	1249.93	600	1,200
Total	1357.49	2,750	3,350



EXPENDITURES

	2023 Actual	2023 Budget	2024 Budget
<u>Discipleship Commission</u>			
Sunday School Curriculum	964.32	500	1,000
Sunday School Supplies	37.07	100	100
Vacation Bible School	1,301.67	1,500	1,500
Discipleship Programs	1,298.22	1,000	2,000
Women's Ministry	380.91	500	1,500
Jr Church/Simply Loved	1,624.86	1,000	2,000
Youth Ministry GYM	2,129.44	2,500	4,000
Nursery	0.00	100	100
Homeschooling for Him	810.56	600	1,000
Total	8,547.05	7,800	13,200
<u>Fellowship & Service Commission</u>			
Fellowship Events	2,715.27	1,500	3,000
Kitchen Supplies	833.44	700	800
Total	3,548.71	2,200	3,800
<u>Miscellaneous</u>			
Attendance At National Conf.	721.00	500	500
EFT Services Charge	0.00		250
Miscellaneous Expense	258.85	100	100
Reimbursable Expense	27,104.35		
Total	28,084.20	600	850
	289,675.57	279,711	262,000
Budget to Budget increase:			-6.33%

GRACE EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

MEMORIAL FUNDS

12/31/2023

<u>Name</u>	<u>Deposits</u>	<u>Disbursements</u>	<u>Balance</u>	<u>Designated Use</u>
Norma Hummel			715.00	
Gurney Williard			176.19	
Chris Reifsnyder			130.00	
Dick Boyer			70.00	
Lois Becker			2525.00	Kitchen & Choir
Stirling Boyer			50.00	
Bruce Hummel			25.00	
Peg Dewitt			500.00	
Bernice Troy			2000.00	
Interest	0.52		25.75	
Totals			6216.94	

Allocations

Children's Ministry			0	
Kitchen&Choir			2525.00	
Unspecified			2931.19	
GYM Missions Trip			735.00	
Accumulated Interest	0.52		25.75	
Totals	0.52		6216.94	



Connectional Ministries Commission Report 2023

Director – Courtney Fasnacht

Commission Members:

Pastor Ted Rathman, Jess Rathman, Vince Kulbitsky, Tim Alison and Denise Reifsnyder

2023 Year in Review:

The Connectional Ministries Commission exists to connect folks to Grace Church and includes the Visitation Team, Prayer Circle, Welcome Table and the New Members Class. After discussion, Security/Greeters was moved and is now under Operations. Thank you to all who served as Coordinators or helped in any way as I served my first year as Director!

2023 began with a search for the Church Secretary position. The Commission advertised the position, interviewed candidates, and provided a recommendation to the Ministry Council to hire Brenda Brown. Brenda trained with Jess throughout May and took on the role in full over the summer. Brenda is a wonderful addition to the Grace Church team. Thank you to Jess for many years of dedicated service and for a successful transition!

Servant Keepers software was purchased and is in the beginning stages of population, and implementation began towards the end of the calendar year. This will be utilized to connect church members to various events and groups within Grace Church. The software will serve to create an updated church directory with members having access and updating their profiles.

The Welcome Table continues to be a fixture every Sunday. Thank you to Vince for always keeping the table staffed and greeting all who come to worship.

Looking forward into 2024:

- The Commission is planning to have a process implemented to outreach to members who have formally left Grace Church or who have not attended services and events for a period of time.
- 2024 will see the continuation of two Sunday Services and there will be further discussion and planning of ways to connect members from each of these more.
- Todd Frehafer will continue coordinating the Visitation Team and will be invited to Commission meetings and he recruits people to be a part of the visitation team.

Let us continue to pray for the direction of Grace Church as Pastor Ted leads us into a new year of exploring how to be a disciple who makes disciples.

Respectfully submitted:

Courtney Fasnacht



Discipleship Commission Report 2023 Director- Annette Holopirek

Commission Members:

Annette Holopirek, Aimee Zimmerman, Ted Rathman, Jodi Sitcosky, Lynn Brignola, Lori Horst, Todd Frehafer

Year in Review:

Children's Sunday School: The teachers are doing a wonderful job loving and caring for each child entrusted to their care. Average attendance in Children's Sunday School is approximately 30 a week. This Nursery thru 5th grades.

Adult Connection Groups: These adult classes meet weekly during Sunday School. This year Grace is providing three different options to dig deeper into God's word. Average attendance has been approximately 25 a week.

Children's Junior Church: Simply Loved. Jess Rathman, directs this ministry and is doing a wonderful job coordinating the teaching teams, teaching herself, encouraging the teachers and decorating the building. Average attendance has been approximately 20 a week.

Women's Ministry: Pam Voydik, is doing a wonderful job at directing this ministry. 2024 planned event calendar is in place. The save a date card for 2024 events will be handed out to the Women of Grace in the next few weeks. Approximately 5 events will be planned for 2024 including an opportunity to serve. There are two opportunities for Women's Bible Study on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. Combined we had 25 women attending these studies. The Bible Study group is done now for winter and will begin again in March 2024 for a spring study on Acts.

VBS: 2023 we had a total of 55 children in attendance. We will plan for that and more for 2024. We are excited to welcome Carol Anne Tripper to our VBS planning team for 2024. The plan is to select the VBS program in January or early February for 2024.

Life Groups: Continue to thrive and grow. There are 4 groups, and they are growing in attendance. Life Groups are a wonderful opportunity to dig into God's Word, encourage others and develop great Christian friendships in a small group setting. There are opportunities to meet on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

Men's Ministry: Ron Long is doing a wonderful job leading the men of Grace in a Wednesday evening Bible Study. There are generally 6/7 men attending the weekly study. The Men's Group are having very successful monthly breakfasts on the last Sat. of each month. The group is planning more activities together for 2024.

MomCO (formerly MOPS): Brianne O'Neill is leading this group. Generally, there are 4/5 women in attendance. They meet twice per month now. They offer childcare on the 1st Thursday of the month.



GYM Youth: Chuck Springer and Kim Hasenauer are directing this outreach. They continue to meet on Sunday evenings and have a weekly attendance of approximately 9. They are planning snow tubing and game nights for the winter. They plan to attend the Winter Thaw together Feb. 16-18, 2024. The Missions trip for 2024 will be a local outreach.

Homeschooling For Him CoOp: Jess Rathman, is directing this outreach. The CoOp meets twice a month in the Grace Fellowship Hall from 9-noon and also has field trips together. The students have been learning: sign language, etiquette, cooking, sewing, archery, financial peace. In addition, they've had a Veterans Appreciation Breakfast and did a Christmas Outreach project for shut ins. Currently 21 children are enrolled in the program.

Looking forward to 2024:

- Women's Ministry- look for the 2nd annual Mother Daughter breakfast in May.
- Men's Group: Plans for more group activities in 2024.
- Local Outreach Missions event date will be finalized in the beginning of 2024.

I am blessed to be supported in this commission by men and women who have servant's hearts and love serving our Lord. A BIG thank you to the commission members and all the people leading and supporting these ministries.



Fellowship Commission Report 2024

Director- Jodi Sitcosky

Commission Members:

Members- Kim Hasenauer, Jill Armenise, Jill Kulbitsky, Chuck Springer

Year in Review:

I would like to start by thanking Grace Adult Ministries for providing many different fellowship opportunities for our church family throughout 2023. Our commission enjoyed providing those opportunities throughout the summer with Connection Cafe. The annual summer picnic was great and very well attended as well as the Friendship Sunday luncheon. Thank you to everyone who provided food for those events. December saw the return of the post Cantata Christmas luncheon which I believe was enjoyed by all. Our commission also helped to provide refreshments and service for two memorial services this past year. My team is dedicated and hardworking; I thank you and appreciate you.

Looking forward:

In 2024 Fellowship and Service commission will continue to spearhead and organize all of our usual events as well as keep our eyes open for any new opportunities for fellowship. As always, if you feel you are gifted in hospitality, come talk to me.

Respectfully submitted,

Jodi Sitcosky



Operations Commission Report 2023

Director- Gary Wehr

2023 Commission Members:

Steve Zimmerman, Gerry Reichert, Mike Reifsnnyder, Mark Stefura, Bill Kline, Mark Klinger, Joe O'Neill, and, Scott Holopirek.

Year in Review:

2023 was another busy year for the OC. The aim of this year's projects was to improve/maintain the building, maintain the outside appearance of our grounds, improve our parsonage property, improve safety, and increase the use of technology.

After the major project in late 2022 of replacing the hot and cold copper tubing throughout the building, holes made in the walls had to be repaired and painted. New, drop ceilings were added to the men's and ladies' rooms. Some of the other projects that were completed to the church building and grounds included TV's being mounted on the walls and adding reception of the church service to the TV in the nursery. New LED lights and carpeting were added to the connection group #2 and #3 rooms along with painting and decorating of these rooms. Hot tar was added to the parking lot cracks. The choir room was moved to a different area. New toilets were installed in the WW men's and ladies' rooms. H.R. Bensinger (our plumber) serviced and made repairs to the oil burner. The organ and pianos were tuned and maintained. And, as always, there were running/clogged toilets to fix along with painting in some rooms, and numerous light bulbs/tubes replaced. Outdoor projects included: John DeWitt, Tim Allison, Gerry Reichert, Jim Chesakis, and me keeping our grass trimmed all summer long. Mulching, planting, trimming, and weeding, were done throughout the summer by volunteers including the Allisons and Scott H. The "ugly" bank along the street was excavated and grass was planted by Brady Koch. Shoveling, plowing, and salting was done in 2023 by TB Landscaping to keep our lot as safe as possible from the weather's elements. Thank you to all who aided this commission throughout 2023 through your sweat equity and/or by making donations to our capital fund.

Improvements were made to the parsonage in 2023 as well. Included are the ripping up of the old carpeting in the dining room, living room and hallway along with the old linoleum in the kitchen. New Pergo-Luxury vinyl flooring and new baseboard was installed in these rooms. The bedroom was repainted. General upkeep and maintenance of the home and grounds. Pastor Ted and Jess do their own work. Thank you, Pastor Ted and Jess, for the loving care you give to the parsonage!

As for future needs, my focus will be new flooring, lighting, ceiling tiles, a shed for the parsonage, a new roof for the parsonage, create a fenced-in area for the children outside and any area of the building that may need upgrading due to its age. The improvements to the buildings and grounds are very noticeable. I am hoping that 2024 will bring about many more improvements. We are truly blessed to be able to worship in such a great facility. Praise be to God.

I look forward to serving in 2024 and plan to continue following God's dream for our church. There will be challenges, I am sure, but with your help and your prayers, the operation commission will do its best to make our church and parsonage properties the best that they can be.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Wehr
Director of Operations



Outreach Commission Report 2023

Director- Julie Wisner

Commission Members:

Kim Hasenhauer, Tyler Pritskutch, Jess Rathman, Pastor Ted Rathman, Chris Trimper, Jill Armenise, Jill Kulbitsky, Yvonne Nester, Aimee Zimmerman, Jenny Koch, Ashley McJunkin

Year in Review:

The annual Easter egg hunt was held at Grace Church - no data

New director started in the Outreach Director position in August 2023, holding the first meeting (reorganization) on August 1, 2023.

The Church Has Left The Building was a success with many completed jobs performed by Grace and Bethesda EC Church members throughout the area held on Sunday, October 8th.

Grace's debut movie showing garnered 59 in ticket sales for *The Blind* on October 14th. There was a showing by Grace members, as well as people not belonging to the church. The movie had a great message, and additional movies will be looked at in the future. Clean up was easy, and profit in the concession stand was \$233.05 for the \$100k fund.

For the second year in a row, Grace EC Church hosted a trunk in the Elementary Trunk or Treat at Schuylkill Haven Sports Performance Center on October 18, 2023. The theme of the trunk this year was Mario Brothers, and candy was distributed. It gave the group an opportunity to hand out information related to events and services at Grace and to promote the Grace Trunk or Treat on Halloween in Schuylkill Haven Borough. The number of participants was approximately 700. It was nice to be a presence within the community, as there was not much in the way of representation from places of worship. The group would like to continue providing this outreach next year.

The return of Boscov's Friends Helping Friends to Grace Church occurred in the fall. The sale of coupons generated \$215 for the \$100k fund. Shopping day was Wednesday, October 18th.

While numbers were slightly down this year, between 250-300 kids came to our annual Trunk or Treat held at Grace on Halloween (October 31). The video games/board games theme was a hit for children, parents and grandparents alike. Visitors told Grace Church members that they always enjoy the well done trunks that go with the theme! Approximately 200 cups of hot chocolate were served!

The event was held Friday, December 8, 2023 at Cake Pros from 6-9pm. Many Grace members attended the event, as well as a few non-members. The aim was to have coffee/baked goods, worship music, testimony, prayer and facilitation of an environment conducive to Christian conversation within the Schuylkill Haven community.

David Breszina completed a Mission Insight report for the group to better know the demographics of the people we are looking to reach. It was very insightful, and the full report is available upon request through the office via email.

Other events coordinated prior to acceptance of the position included Knoebels' picnic on July 9th and Weekend to Remember group formation that attended in King of Prussia, November 17-19, 2023.



Grace Church

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Looking forward:

- The suggestion was made to get a vinyl banner ordered for next year that has the Grace name and logo on it. Such a banner would have many uses for the Outreach Commission, as well as other missions within the church.
- Outreach will consider holding another movie event if the right movie comes this way.
- The group is exploring ways to reach out to Penn State Schuylkill students.
- Two additional events are scheduled at Cake Pros on January 12, 2024 and February 9, 2024.
- Knoebels' picnic with possible worship service
- Additional Weekend to Remember dates: Hershey, February 9-11, 2024
- Chili tasting contest/fundraiser
- Elderly meal for the community

Respectfully Submitted,
Julie L. Wisner



Worship Commission Report 2023

Director- Judy Devlin

Commission Members: Tim Allison, John Dewitt, Dave Horst, Ted Rathman, Jodi Sitcosky

Year in Review: The Worship Commission coordinates all aspects of each of our services throughout the year including Advent services, Lenten services, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Joint Worship services and Back to School Sunday. Coordination of ushers, nursery, audio/visual, church picnic, piano/organ maintenance and choir also fall to this commission. We strive to keep an open line of communication with anyone who has a concern or suggestion regarding our service formats. Our goal is to consistently monitor the format of our services so that we can continue to offer meaningful worship experiences for our congregation.

Worship Commission meetings were held in April, August and November.
Our first meeting of 2024 will be on January 15, 2024

Year in Review:

FEBRUARY 3rd and 4th: Director of MC attended the Ministry Council Retreat

APRIL 6th : Maundy Thursday Service

JUNE 25th : Combined Service – Church Picnic

JULY 9th : David Kuntz was our guest speaker

SEPTEMBER 10th: FALL SCHEDULE BEGAN

OCTOBER 22nd: John Smith was our guest speaker/OCTOBER 29th was FRIENDSHIP SUNDAY

NOVEMBER 19th: Our choir members participated in the COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING SERVICE held at St. Mark's UCC in Cressona

DECEMBER 17th : Combined Service

CHRISTMAS CANTATA **"Come Let Us Adore"** followed by the Christmas Luncheon

The Schuylkill Chorale Society booked our sanctuary for their 2023 Holiday Performance.

Established a budget for 2024

Our commission re-visited the prospect of considering a return to one morning service on Sundays, utilizing a "blended service" format. The discussion was carried over into Ministry Council meetings and will be discussed further at the 2024 Ministry Council Retreat.

Thank you to each member of the WORSHIP COMMISSION for their dedication and attendance at our meetings throughout the year.

Submitted by, Judy Devlin

**Grace Evangelical Congregational Church
Schuylkill Haven, Pennsylvania
Church Statistical Report 2023**

Average Attendance

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Morning Worship	149	141	119	90	142

Livestream Average for 2023: 13

Membership Changes

Membership as of December 31, 2022 494

Deaths:

- Lois Becker
- Bruce Hummel
- Irene Wehr
- Peggy DeWitt
- Bernice Troy
- Brady Koch
- Barbara Williard

Transfer:

- Susan Brown

New Members:

- + Bill Ambrose
- + Linda Ambrose
- + Brenda Brown
- + Kurt Brown
- + Sarah Dillman
- + Ethan Kline
- + Dylan Knittle
- + Kiera Nunemacher
- + Lily Rathman
- + Parker Reifsnyder
- + Nathan Schwartz
- + Ava Shappell
- + Lori Steffy
- + Roger Steffy
- + Carol Ann Trimper
- + Chris Trimper
- + Lilly Wisner

Membership as of December 31, 2023

503



Pastors Thoughts

2023 Year in review:

Last year we experienced some new things at Grace and continued to seek to be faithful to the mission God has called us to do in reaching our community and participate in His redemptive story. My family had the joy of celebrating 10 years of ministry at Grace Church in July and as we said then, we have appreciated doing life and ministry with this church family and I'm excited about what the future will bring. A new year brings new opportunities and I'm looking forward to how God will direct us in 2024, but here are a few things that happened last year:

- **Experiencing our first Pastoral Intern at Grace:**
 - July 2022 – October 2023; We had the opportunity to fulfill a prayer request to bring on a pastoral intern to serve at Grace and I'm grateful for the Lord providing David Brezina for this purpose this past year. I'm thankful for how God used this time in David and Sammi's life and Grace Church's life and for what I personally learned through this experience. Thank you to you, Grace Church family, for welcoming this couple and loving them the way you did throughout their time with us. I appreciate all that you did for this young couple serving at Grace.

- **Ministry to men**
 - In January 2023 we launched our Men's Breakfast ministry in which the last Saturday of each month we meet together for bacon, and other food of course, to focus on God, and have time for discussion. This ministry has been received well and I'm thankful for the guys who continue to join us and I pray build relationships and grow. We also held a couple of events that took us out of the building for fellowship as well as some service opportunities to help some members of the church.

- **Coffee House @ Cake Pros**
 - In December a few people from Grace Church began doing an outreach in a local business at Cake Pros by providing a time of music and fellowship with hopes to create a place for spiritual conversations to occur.



Looking Forward in 2024

As I look back on 2023, it certainly ended much different than it begun and I've been praying extensively on where God is leading. As I shared in July of this past year, I am more convinced than ever that we need to be a church of disciples who makes disciples and I believe the level of intensity in this area needs to increase. This leading is what prompted the 100K Fund so that we can use this as the vehicle to see God working in and through us and allow us to see that God's power and presence has not left the world when Jesus ascended. In the last six months we have generated almost 25K which is amazing as we think about all the people who contributed to making this happen and those who felt led to give above and beyond in sacrificial ways. We will continue to pursue this 100K in this new year. My prayer is we continue to see God move in powerful ways as we are obedient to the mission He has given us.

- **Discipling Ministries**

- In January 2023 I began to put a plan into place to intentionally take people through discipleship training material as I continue to personally pursue God's call for me to focus more of my time on personal discipleship in my own life. In 2024 the Ministry Council will be discussing our discipleship process at Grace and how we can be more intentional about brining people through discipleship in such a way that they are equipped and confident to make disciples. Our goal is to have generations of disciples, which is to say that a person that you've disciplined, disciplines someone, who disciplines someone else.
- In 2024 we will be looking to invite people into discipling relationships and developing what our discipleship process at Grace Church will look like for the future.

I look forward to another year in which we experience the Spirit of God move in our midst as we see more people give their lives to Jesus and we witness families changed by Him.

Respectfully submitted by:
Pastor Ted Rathman