

2024

ANNUAL REPORTS



FOR THE
ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
January 19, 2025

GRACE EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH
SCHUYLKILL HAVEN, PA



Annual Report

Congregational Meeting Agenda January 19, 2025

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 2025 Director Positions

Report of the Treasurer

Reports of the Commission Directors

Report of the Pastor

Old Business

New Business

- Review and adoption of the 2025 budget

Reading of the Minutes for approval

Adjournment

Closing Prayer

Grace E.C. Church
2024 Congregational Meeting
Jan. 21, 2024

The annual Congregational Meeting of Grace E.C. Church was held at 9:30 am January 21, 2024 with Pastor Ted Rathman presiding.

Pastor Ted opened the meeting with prayer.

The minutes from the 2023 Congregational Meeting, along with commission reports, candidates for offices, Pastor's report and the proposed 2024 budget were distributed in the information packet. There were no questions on the presentation of the 2023 minutes.

2024 Ministry Council Officers (one-year term):

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

Officers approved on motion of Roger Steffy and Mark Stefura.

2024 Ministry Council Director positions:

Connectional Ministries Commission: Courtney Fasnacht
Discipleship Commission: Annette Holopirek
Fellowship and Service Commission: Jodi Sitcosky
Operations Commission: Gary Wehr
Outreach Commission: Julie Wisner
Worship Commission: Judy Devlin

The directors have been approved by the Ministry Council, and are presented for information. It was noted that Anne Holopirek will be moving later this year, and the congregation was encouraged to think about filling that position when that time comes.

Treasurer's Report:

2023 actual totals were presented; no questions from the congregation.

Commission Reports:

No questions.

Pastor's Report:

Pastor Ted's goal is developing a discipleship plan for 2024. He expressed his thanks to the Ministry Council members and commission directors for their work during the year.

Reports were approved as presented on motion of Jill Kulbitsky and Chris Trimper.

Old Business:

None.

New Business:

The budget was reviewed and discussed by Pastor Ted.

- Giving should be Consistent, Personal, Proportionate and Intentional.
- 2023 actual expenses were \$289,084.20, while 2023 actual income was \$297,099.25.
- We were about \$5000 under budget, but expenses were also less than budgeted.
- Giving has gone up almost \$100,000 since 2018.
- We have decreased the budgeted amount slightly for 2024.
- The total budget for 2024 is \$262,000, broken down as follows:
 - Tithes and offerings \$257,000
 - Facility use \$ 3,000
 - Fundraising \$ 1,000
 - Homeschool Co-Op \$ 1,000

The 2024 budget was approved on motion of John DeWitt and Kurt Brown.

Information on the \$100,000 capital fund drive was presented:

- \$24,037 has been brought in through this fund to date.
- The list of projects completed so far includes carpeting, painting, lights, and parking lot sealing, amounting to total expenditures to date of \$20,042.96.
- Another \$44,660 in projects is planned.
- Pastor Ted encouraged us to dream about other projects God might have in store.

Other business:

John DeWitt thanked Pastor Ted on behalf of the congregation for all he has done this year.

Minutes:

Minutes of the meeting were read by Rosanne Chesakis and approved on motion of Ed Zipay and Jerry Reichert.

Pastor Ted closed in prayer.

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 2025:

- Director of the Connectional Ministries Commission- **Courtney Fasnacht**
- Director of the Discipleship Commission-**Rick Deal**
- 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- **Tyler Pritiskutch**



2025 BUDGET - For Congregational Approval

REVENUE

| <u>Revenue</u> | 2024 Actual | 2024 Budget | 2025 Budget |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Tithes and Offerings | 247,149.99 | 257,000 | 260,000 |
| Property Use | 1,755.00 | 3,000 | 3,000 |
| Interest & Dividends | 5,528.20 | 0 | 4,500 |
| Fundraising & Misc. Income | 1,148.59 | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Misc. Reimbursement (not income) | 41,953.86 | 0 | |
| Memorial Fund | | 0 | 500 |
| Homeschooling for Him | 2,631.00 | 1,000 | 2,400 |
| Coffee and Worship | | | 1,500 |
| Total Brought In | 300,166.64 | 279,711 | |
| Less Misc. Reimbursment | 41,953.86 | | |
| Budget Income | 258,212.78 | 262,000 | 272,900 |

OTHER FUNDS

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| First Citizens Savings Acct. | \$6,551.00 |
| Capital Fund | \$52,562.00 |
| Stocks/Mutual Funds | \$132,169.74 |

Total

EXPENDITURES

| <u>Pastoral Expenses</u> | 2024 Actual | 2024 Budget | 2025 Budget |
|------------------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Pastor's Salary | 51,286.64 | 51,687 | 59,479 |
| Pension: Employer Contrib | 4,560.00 | 4,560 | 4,800 |
| Employer Flex Contribution | 4,432.24 | 5,000 | 5,000 |
| Hospitalization | 15,188.50 | 15,101 | 15,627 |
| Travel Reimbursement | 2,270.41 | 2,000 | 2,000 |
| Continuing Education | 126.78 | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| FICA- SS & Medicare | 6,590.00 | 6,240 | 6,840 |
| PA Tax | 1,894.04 | 1,906 | 1,997 |
| Local- HAB/EIT/LST | 550.62 | 561 | 591 |
| ECC Benefit Corp Service Fee | 125.00 | 125 | 125 |
| Total | 87,024.23 | 88,180 | 97,459 |

Employee Expenses

| | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Employee Salaries | 26,656.54 | 29,268 | 30,516 |
| Employee Taxes | 6067.05 | 6,555 | 6,835 |
| Disability & Workers Comp | 541.92 | 700 | 700 |
| Payroll Processing | | 1,500 | 1,500 |
| Employee Gifts | 600.00 | 600 | 600 |
| Total | 33,865.51 | 38,623 | 40,151 |

**2025 Budget
EXPENDITURES**

| | 2024 | 2024 | 2025 |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| <u>Operations Commission</u> | Actual | Budget | Budget |

Operating Expenses

| | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Church Oil | 5,358.00 | 15,000 | 8,000 |
| Church Electric | 2,939.28 | 2,500 | 3,000 |
| Church Water | 449.32 | 250 | 400 |
| Church Sewer | 391.69 | 200 | 350 |
| Church Phone & Internet | 3,357.65 | 2,500 | 3,000 |
| Parsonage Electric | 2,776.61 | 2,700 | 3,200 |
| Parsonage Water | 556.62 | 550 | 600 |
| Parsonage Sewer | 504.85 | 500 | 550 |
| Parsonage Phone | 360.00 | 300 | 360 |
| Parsonage Garbage | 296.00 | 240 | 300 |
| Church Repairs | 5,442.76 | 6,000 | 5,000 |
| Parsonage Expense | 4,399.92 | 4,000 | 3,500 |
| Church Building Insurance | 8,882.00 | 6,800 | 7,900 |
| Office Supplies | 1,724.87 | 2,000 | 2,000 |
| Church Supplies | 632.70 | 200 | 800 |
| Maintenance Contracts | 100.70 | 200 | 500 |
| Furnishings | 4,380.62 | 1,000 | 1,300 |
| Janitorial Supplies | 1,030.45 | 1,000 | 1,200 |
| Landscaping/Groundskeeping | 663.54 | 500 | 500 |
| Piano & Organ Maintenance | 1,760.00 | 2,000 | 2,200 |
| Snow Plowing | 3,031.11 | 5,000 | 3,000 |
| Mower Expense | 1,457.88 | 1,500 | 1,500 |
| Security/Safety | 466.00 | 3,000 | 3,000 |
| Ministry Funds | 14,102.67 | 13,500 | 14,000 |
| Total | 65,065.24 | 71,440 | 66,160 |

Worship Commission

| | | | |
|----------------------------|----------|-------|-------|
| Guest Speakers & Programs | 925.00 | 500 | 1,000 |
| Multi-Media | 2,522.38 | 5,000 | 5,000 |
| Seasonal Decorations | | 150 | 500 |
| Worship Supplies/Equipment | 180.89 | 500 | 1,000 |



2025 Budget EXPENDITURES

Worship Commission (cont.)

| | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Music/Choir | 873.13 | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Special Music | 400.00 | 500 | 800 |
| Total | 4,901.40 | 7,650 | 9,300 |

Outreach Commission

| | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Global Ministries Office | 200.00 | 200 | 200 |
| Global Giving Intl. Churches | 4,000.00 | 4,000 | 4,000 |
| World Emergency | 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 |
| Detwiler Family | 1,336.00 | 0 | 4,000 |
| Missionaries Christmas Gifts | 1,250.00 | 1,000 | 1,250 |
| Grace Outreach Ministries | 4,180.77 | 3,000 | 5,000 |
| Local/other Ministries | 1,497.34 | 5,000 | 3,000 |
| Coffee and Worship Ministry | | | 1,500 |
| Stone Ridge Benevolent Care | 100.00 | 100 | 100 |
| Student Aid | 100.00 | 100 | 0 |
| Twin Pines | 100.00 | 100 | 100 |
| Manna Fund | 100.00 | 100 | 0 |
| Benevolent Care | 791.95 | 5,107 | 4,000 |
| Total | 29,888.06 | 35,007 | 39,450 |

Connectional Min. Commission

| | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Printing & Promotions | 1137.68 | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Gifts | 123.94 | 600 | 600 |
| Guest Services | | 550 | 550 |
| Servant Keepers | 919.88 | 1,200 | 780 |
| Total | 2181.50 | 3,350 | 2,930 |

Fellowship & Service Commission

| | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Fellowship Events | 2,568.95 | 3,000 | 3,000 |
| Kitchen Supplies | 970.03 | 800 | 1,000 |
| Total | 3,538.98 | 3,800 | 4,000 |



**2025 BUDGET
EXPENDITURES**

| | 2024 Actual | 2024 Budget | 2025 Budget |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| <u>Discipleship Commission</u> | | | |
| Sunday School Curriculum | 765.68 | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Sunday School Supplies | | 100 | 100 |
| Vacation Bible School | 1,769.00 | 1,500 | 2,500 |
| Discipleship Programs | 1,250.35 | 2,000 | 3,000 |
| Women's Ministry | 742.23 | 1,500 | 1,500 |
| Jr Church/Simply Loved | 1,199.60 | 2,000 | 1,000 |
| Youth Ministry GYM | 488.71 | 4,000 | 1,000 |
| Nursery | | 100 | 100 |
| Homeschooling for Him | 1,503.48 | 1,000 | 2,400 |
| Total | 7,719.05 | 13,200 | 12,600 |
| | | | |
| <u>Miscellaneous</u> | | | |
| Attendance At National Conf. | 158.00 | 500 | 500 |
| EFT Services Charge | 134.45 | 250 | 250 |
| Miscellaneous Expense | 383.48 | 100 | 100 |
| Reimbursable Expense | 41,706.68 | | |
| Total | 42,382.61 | 850 | 850 |
| | 276,566.58 | 262,100 | 272,900 |
| Budget to Budget increase: | | | 4.12% |

**GRACE EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
MEMORIAL FUNDS**

12/31/2024

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Deposits</u> | <u>Disbursements</u> | <u>Balance</u> | <u>Designated Use</u> |
|------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Bruce and Norma Hummel | | | 740.00 | |
| Gurney Williard | | | 176.19 | |
| Chris Reifsnyder | | | 130.00 | |
| Lois Becker | | | 2525.00 | Kitchen & Choir |
| Stirling Boyer | | | 120.00 | |
| Peg Dewitt | | | 550.00 | |
| Bernice Troy | | | 2025.00 | Security Cameras |
| Barb Williard | | | 50.00 | |
| Interest | 2.43 | | 234.82 * | |
| Totals | | | 6551.01 | |

Allocations

| | |
|----------------------|----------|
| Kitchen&Choir | 2525.00 |
| Security Cameras | 2025.00 |
| Unspecified | 1766.19 |
| Accumulated Interest | 234.82 * |
| Totals | 6551.01 |

* The Memorial Funds Account was moved from LINKBANK to the Church's existing savings account at First Citizens Community Bank (FCCB) on 3/31/24. The FCCB account had a balance of \$200.55, which was added to the Memorial Funds.



Connectional Ministries Commission Report 2024

Director – Courtney Fasnacht

Commission Members:

Pastor Ted Rathman, Brenda Brown, Vince Kulbitsky, and Denise Reifsnyder

2024 Year in Review:

The Connectional Ministries Commission exists to connect people to Grace Church and includes the Visitation Team, Prayer Circle, Welcome Table and the New Members Class. 2024 brought discussions about helping folks to find and utilize their spiritual gifts and applying them in different areas to serve. Sunday Huddles were implemented in September and the CMC participated. Look for more to come. This will be a focus in the new year as the Commission continues to explore ways to empower others for disciple making.

The Commission purchased two flags that are being used for various events, as well as flag stands, customized table covers and notepads with the church logo. These items have been especially useful with the many outreach events that we have hosted or been involved with over the last year in our community.

Servant Keepers software is still being populated with church members' information and we hope to implement this further for use in the coming calendar year. This will be utilized to connect church members to various events and groups within Grace Church. The software will also provide an updated church directory.

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

Todd Frehafer has continued coordinating the Visitation Team and there are new members who have become involved in making visits as the number of people on our visitation list continues to grow.

Looking forward into 2025:

Please connect with us if you are looking to identify your spiritual gifts and how you can serve here at Grace E.C. Church. Our prayer is that our Grace Church family embarks on a transformative journey of spiritual growth as we go deeper on our mission with God by being and making disciples of Jesus in order to love people that desperately need to see and hear the Good News!

Thank you to the commission members and all the people involved in serving!

Respectfully submitted:

Courtney Fasnacht



Discipleship Commission Report 2024 Director- Annette Holopirek (thru Sept 2024)

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 teaching each child entrusted to their care. Average attendance at Children's Sunday School is approximately 28 a week. This represents Nursery thru 5th grades for a 9 month period.

Adult Connection Groups: These adult classes meet weekly during the Sunday School hour. Average attendance has been approximately 28 a week for a 9 month period.

Children's Junior Church: Simply Loved. Jess Rathman, directs this ministry and is doing a wonderful job coordinating the teaching teams, being a teacher, encouraging the teachers and decorating the building. Average attendance has been approximately 20 a week. We tried a new format in the fall by having the kids attend the regular service until the singing was done and then be dismissed to their classrooms. During the last song, kids are being brought back to the sanctuary to join their parents. This has alleviated long durations of kids being in their classroom—especially those who attend Sunday school as well.

Women's Ministry: Pam Voydik, is doing a wonderful job at directing this ministry. The 2025 planned event calendar is in place. The Bible study group will only meet once a week starting in April.

VBS: Under our new director, Carol Ann Trimper, we had 77 children in attendance (from 50 families) come to at least one evening of VBS in 2024 (up from 55 in 2023). We will plan for that and more for 2025. We are glad that Carol Ann is willing to direct VBS again in 2025 and already has a curriculum ordered called Wonder Junction .

Life Groups: 2024 saw growth from 4 life groups to 6 and they are all continuing to thrive and grow 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 7/8 men attending the weekly study. The Men's Group also continues to have monthly breakfasts on the last Saturday of each month which Nick Wisner helps coordinate.

MOMCO (formerly MOPS): Brianne O'Neill is leading this group. Generally, there are 4/5 women in attendance for the 1st Thursday of the month during which childcare is offered. MOMCO will often have a fun get-together outside of regular meetings either for play time with the kids, or mom time without kids.



GYM Youth: Chuck Springer and Kim Hasenauer are directing this outreach. The group is trying out a new time and format—meeting on Sundays from 12:30-2:30pm often providing lunch. There is a weekly attendance of approximately 10. They plan to attend a winter retreat at Refreshing Mountain on January 31-Feb 2, 2025. The Missions trip for 2025 is still in the planning stages but they're considering going in June with the Big Creek organization, most likely to Kentucky.

Homeschooling For Him Co-op: Jess Rathman is directing this outreach. The Co-op meets every Thursday 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, nutrition and Spanish. They also had a Veterans Appreciation Breakfast and a Christmas outreach for "God's Helping Hands". Currently 37 children are enrolled in the program from 18 families.

New Director for 2025: We're so thankful for Annette Holopirek and her willingness to lead this commission for several years and wish her the best in her new Florida home. We will miss her leadership but feel blessed that Rick Deal felt led to take over as leader of the Discipleship Commission starting in 2025.

--Submitted by Brenda Brown



Fellowship and Service Commission Report 2024

Director: Jodi Sitcosky

Commission Members:

Kim Hasenauer, Jill Armenise, Jill Kulbitsky and Chuck Springer

Year in Review:

Thank you to Grace Adult Ministry for providing some fun fellowship opportunities in 2024. Our commission was happy to provide food and fellowship opportunities all summer with Connection Cafes. Our annual summer picnic was a success with many in attendance for this special day. Our annual Friendship Sunday luncheon was also very well attended and Fellowship hall was bursting at the seams for the Christmas luncheon. Many thanks to my hardworking, dedicated crew who do all they can to help make these events run smoothly.

Looking forward:

Fellowship and Service commission will be lending support to the Outreach Commission for a planned community meal in February and would be open to more collaborations in the future. We look forward to serving our church family and beyond in 2025.

Respectfully submitted,
Jodi Sitcosky



Operations Commission Report 2024 Director- Gary Wehr

2024 Commission Members:

Steve Zimmerman, Gerry Reichert, Mike Reifsnyder, Mark Stefura, Bill Kline, Mark Klinger, Joe O'Neill, Scott Holopirek, Bill Ambrose, and Thomas Warmuth.

Year in Review:

2024 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. Through the generous donations made to the capital fund, many improvements were made in 2024.

Improvements to the church building include new carpeting in all SS and office rooms, new LED light fixtures throughout the west wing rooms and hallway, new WI-FI friendly thermostats added to three SS rooms, new ceramic tile flooring at two of the entrances along with new mats, and a new motor and fan belt at one of the upstairs exhaust fans. A new vinyl fenced-in area was constructed for kids outside by the shed. Three new signs were purchased; two on the property and one where people turn onto Washington Street. The building insurance carrier was changed at a cost savings of \$3540. H.R. Bensinger (our plumber) serviced and made repairs to the oil burner and heating system. 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. Our Cub Cadet mowers are serviced and maintained regularly. Shoveling, plowing, and salting was done in 2024 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 2024 through your sweat equity and/or by making donations to our capital fund.

Improvements were made to the parsonage in 2024 as well. Included are a new roof, a new shed, and the entire front of the home was pressure washed. The living room was freshly painted, and a shiplap wall installed. Also, electric was run to hang a TV, new baseboard, outlets and light switches. The hallway was also painted and new baseboard and a new air return. The girls' bathroom got new tile floor, baseboard, toilet, new air vents and new lighting. The master bedroom got new flooring, air vents and baseboard. Pastor Ted and Jess do most of the work. Thank you, Pastor Ted and Jess, for the loving care you give to the parsonage!

As for future needs, my focus will be a major upgrade to our sanctuary, possibly including painting, carpeting, AC, pew reupholstering, platform built up front and new lighting. This project is currently in the planning stage. Also new carpeting in the lobby and hallways, and new LED lighting in the east wing. The improvements to the buildings and grounds are very noticeable. I am hoping that 2025 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 2025 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 building, grounds and parsonage properties the best that they can be.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Wehr
Director of Operations



Outreach Commission Report 2024

Director- Julie Wisner

Commission Members:

Kim Hasenhauer, Tyler Pritiskutch, Jess Rathman, Pastor Ted Rathman, Chris Trimper, Jill Armenise, Jill Kulbitsky, Yvonne Nester, Aimee Zimmerman, Jenny Koch, Ashley McJunkin, Amanda Deal, Pam Voydik, Gene Voydik

Year in Review:

Outreach underwent a vision change this year. Pastor Ted shared that he would like to restructure meetings to be in accordance with Acts 1:8. It reads, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

This means Outreach should see how the group is best serving Schuylkill Haven and vicinity (Jerusalem), Schuylkill County (Judea/Samaria) and beyond (ends of the earth). The question posed is, "How is what we are doing contributing to us being disciples who make disciples?" All events should be developed with this in mind.

Grace Church participated in a Super Bowl Sunday food drive.

Coffee & Worship events were held the second Friday of every month throughout the entire 2024 year. Many different venues were trialed as the numbers grew, leaving some venues too small to hold all the visitors. Worship music accompanied an atmosphere conducive to talking about Jesus Christ. The various hosts of Coffee & Worship included Cake Pros, outside at Bubeck Park, Grace Church Fellowship Hall (rain), Salt & Light Cafe in Reading, Walk-In Art Center, and Riviera Maya Restaurant in Pottsville. Coffee & Worship even went on the road to One Rock, One Community in September, as well as Borough Day, and Recovery Church in Pine Grove. Many hands helped to make these events a success. 7 Weeks Coffee was not only provided for free at these events, but bags were available for purchase. Coffee & Worship t-shirts were sold, as well.

Chris & Carol Ann Trimper and family began offering free art classes to children this year. There were a total of three different sessions held throughout the year (Easter, Coat of Many Colors, and Give Thanks for Jesus). Approximately 15-25 kids were in attendance at each session.

The annual Easter egg hunt was held at Grace Church on the Saturday before Easter. This annual event was a success with 136 children registered for the event on Saturday, March 31. Pastor Ted got to deliver an Easter message to participants and their families prior to unleashing the eager children to hunt for over 2500 eggs! The annual GYM bake sale fundraiser made over \$740 for their fund.

A Hoss' fundraiser was conducted in the spring. Gift card sales and dine-in on April 28th to benefit GYM at Hoss's was a successful fundraiser. The gift cards generated \$210 in profit and \$499.52 was raised from dine-in sales for a total of \$709.52.

Steven Detwiler spoke to the congregation on 4/14 during the service. A small group met with Steven on May 20 to further discuss ways to reach students on campus at Penn State Schuylkill. Back-to-school goodie bags were put together with all the generous donations from church members throughout the summer. Members from Grace handed out goodie bags to Penn State Schuylkill students on Tuesday, August 27th from 8am-2pm. Coffee, tea, pastries and light popcorn were also served. Many conversations were had with students and a few connections were made. This was a very well received event by staff on campus, students and Grace members. It was also an answer to prayer, as 2024 was finally the year that Grace was granted permission to get on campus!



Grace held a Yardsale on premises on Saturday, May 18 with the help of the security team. The weather wasn't great, but that didn't stop the yardsalers. The inside and outside of the church were a welcoming venue

with music and a concession stand selling baked goods, coffee and breakfast hot dogs! Profits to the 100k fund were \$2449.50. This event helped to bring people to our property, helped church members re-home items, and allowed us to participate in a community wide event. The potential to sell more food next year would be explored. Many yardsalers were also thankful for our clean restrooms!

Brenda Brown volunteered to be the new delegate for Schuylkill Haven and Vicinity Council of Churches, of which Grace Church is a member.

The "Stay Connected to Grace" forms were started this year. Since there were many new families at VBS, Outreach took the opportunity to print a half sheet of paper with all the dates through the rest of 2024 to let families know when and where events are taking place. These events were in the lobby for guests to the service and given out at Grace Church events.

A sub sale was held through Downtown Tavern on Sunday, July 21. Members ordered and paid prior to the delivery, then picked up their sub after the joint service on 7/21. There was a profit of \$88 generated.

Grace Gear orders were taken to order new apparel. It was not a fundraiser, just a way for people who didn't have any gear to be able to obtain some.

Pavilion H was the site of our first worship service with live music at Knoebels followed by potluck and rides! It was held on Sunday, August 4th. Fun was had by all, and the event will continue next year.

Grace EC Church again registered participated in Friends Helping Friends events through Boscov's. Passes were sold at \$5 each. One pass entitled the holder to a discount at Boscov's on October 22, 2024 in store or online. A total of 39 certificates were sold at \$5 each for a straight profit of \$195 for the 100k fund.

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. This year's event was the first time a prayer team went around to the various sites and prayed for homeowners and workers.

Back-to-school looked a little different in 2024. While all students and faculty were prayed for this year, a program was started with all school kids names placed on apples on a tree in the hallway. The goal was to have all students be prayed for by church members during the school year, fostering generational relationships! Church members adopted all 55 apples!

Also ordered were two new Grace banners to hang at events, as well as Grace logo tablecloths. Both have the updated logos on them.

Grace Church again helped with free kid activities on Borough Day on Parkway. Church members and GYM kids helped from 8am-4pm on Saturday, September 28 with crafts, Smores in a bag (a big hit!) and lawn games as free entertainment for the children. Crafts included gimp, potholders and recycled Sunday school crafts. Many children attended despite the rainy weather.

Outreach was a featured commission during the first Grace Church Huddle.

A group from Grace Church participated in the Schuylkill Haven Elementary Center Trunk or Treat. The work theme (Colossians 3:23) was used to serve children at the school trunk or treat on 10/22 from 5-7pm continuously. There were approximately 500 kids. Grace was the only faith based organization/church in attendance. In keeping with Halloween, the annual Trunk or Treat event was held at the church on 10/31 from 6-8pm. Estimates on attendance were a little over 200 participants



who received lots of candy, cookies and hot chocolate and info on upcoming Grace events from the ten trunks that participated in the event.

Some Grace Outreach members met with Dee from Global Ministries to see how the Outreach members can meet their mission to the ends of the earth. Reconnection was made with the church's missionaries to receive their newsletters to find out how we can help. Lastly, Steven and Danielle Detwiler became Grace's newest missionaries, working in the Reading area on local college campuses! God is good!

Looking forward:

- Unplanned movie event to celebrate sanctity of life, Saturday, January 18, 2025 at 6pm
- Souper Bowl Sunday food drive, Sunday, February 9th
- Senior Citizens Free Meal, Saturday, February 15th at 4:00pm
- Additional Weekend to Remember dates: Hershey, February 28-March 2, 2025, March 14-16 and 21-23 both at Skytop Lodge in the Poconos and November 21-23 at Crowne Plaza in King of Prussia, PA
- Coffee & Worship at Walk-In Art Center, Friday, March 14, 2025
- Easter Egg Hunt, Saturday, April 19, 2025
- Grace Church Yard Sale, Saturday, May 17th
- Coffee & Worship, Friday, June 13, 2025 at Bubeck Park
- Coffee & Worship, Friday, July 11, 2025 at Bubeck Park
- Knoebels' Picnic and service, Sunday, August 3, 2025
- Coffee & Worship, Friday, August 9, 2025 at Bubeck Park
- Coffee & Worship at Borough Day (9/27) and One Rock, One Community event
- Coffee & Worship, Friday, October 10, 2025 at Walk-In Art Center
- Trunk or Treat at the church, Friday, October 31, 2025
- Craft Fair at Grace Church, Saturday, November 29, 2025

Other potential ideas included Christmas Caroling, Oktoberfest, Schuylkill Haven Halloween Parade and Faith Night at the Reading Phillies.

We're always looking for extra hands to help join Outreach!

Respectfully Submitted,
Julie L. Wisner



Worship Commission Report 2024

Director- Judy Devlin

Commission Members:

Tim Allison, John Dewitt, Tristan Grubb, Dave Horst, Tyler Pritiskutch, Ted Rathman, Dorothy Rowe, Jodi Sitcosky, Beth Zipay

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.

- The director of the WC attended the MC Retreat in January and participated in the inaugural "SUNDAY HUDDLE" on 9/8/24
- We have increased the number of times that communion is offered during each year.
- Once again, our choir participated in the combined choir for the Community Thanksgiving Service held at Jerusalem Lutheran Church on 11/24/2024.
- Linda Springer has graciously agreed to be our Advent Coordinator
- Our 2024 cantata, "Gloria...the Wonders of His Love, was presented on 12/15/2024 followed by the annual Christmas Luncheon.
- Established a budget for 2025

Thank you to each member of the Worship Commission for their dedication and attendance at our meetings throughout the year. I greatly appreciate your support during my tenure as the director of the Worship commission!

Looking forward:

Tyler Pritiskutch, incoming director of the Worship Commission, will chair the first meeting for 2025 which will be held on Tuesday, 1/14/2025 at 6:30.

We will continue to explore times throughout the year when we can provide JOINT SERVICES for the congregation. We will also continue to keep our minds focused on keeping our services effective and meaningful, making adjustments to service formats as they are needed and continuing to seek individuals who could potentially be considered for the Worship Commission.

I am grateful for this opportunity to serve our congregation in this capacity through the years.

Submitted by
Judy Devlin

**Grace Evangelical Congregational Church
Schuylkill Haven, Pennsylvania
Church Statistical Report 2024**

Average Attendance

| | <u>2024</u> | <u>2023</u> | <u>2022</u> | <u>2021</u> | <u>2020</u> |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Morning Worship | 152 | 149 | 141 | 119 | 90 |

Livestream Average for 2024: 16

Membership Changes

Membership as of December 31, 2023 **503**

Deaths (non-members): **-Sharon Fowler
-Helen Lattimore**

New Members: **+ Brett Brossman
+ Michele Brossman
+ Frank Modica
+ Francesca Modica
+ Ted Staller
+ Lindsey Waite
+ Matthew Waite**

Membership as of December 31, 2024 **510**

Pastor's Thoughts

2024 Year in review:

It's amazing how fast a year goes when you sit down and have to think about what took place over the last 365 days. I have never felt more confident that the Lord has placed me at Grace to help us be a church of disciples who makes disciples who makes disciples. I am so grateful for all the Lord has brought us through together in 2024 and the many ways I have grown and seen many of you grow in your walk with Jesus. I am extremely excited to see all the Lord has in store for us in 2025. Below, are a few reminders of the cool stuff God did and a couple of places I see God taking us in the new year.

- **Coffee & Worship:**

- This ministry was launched in 2023, but really took off in 2024. Each month on the 2nd Friday you could find a group from Grace at various locations in our community using their skills and gifts to take the worship of Jesus outside our four walls. Tyler Pritiskutch, who leads our Worship Team and will be taking over as Worship Commission Director this year, has been doing an excellent job leading this ministry, and a huge thanks to the worship team who contributes every month, as well as many others from Grace who lend their aid to make these pop-up events happen.

- **Baptism and Re-dedication Service**

- Throughout the Winter/Spring of 2024 I gave invitations in various sermons for anyone who sensed a desire to be baptized or rededicate their life to Christ to come talk with me about being baptized. As a result of that response, we held a service at Ed and Beth Zipay's, who graciously hosted us at their pool, to baptize 13 people who wanted to publicly proclaim their profession of faith and dedicate or re-dedicate their life to Christ. As we continue to see people step into a life of discipleship, I anticipate this happening more often and so we will definitely plan more opportunities for this type of service.

Looking Forward in 2025

Two major areas the Lord has laid on my heart in 2024 are not a surprise to you since I shared them before. I see these two items being intertwined in the Lord's direction for 2025

- **Discipleship Pathway**

- Last year I completed what is called a "Learning Cohort" with Exponential which is a ministry geared towards helping pastors and church leaders be intentional about disciple making. I have been sharing this with you in various ways throughout 2024 and in 2025 you will be given opportunity to step onto this pathway and receive some intentional discipleship training. This will become part of the DNA of Grace Church moving forward and I'm believing God will use this pathway to help us achieve the mission God has called His Church to; that is, to make disciples who make disciples. We will begin with some training for those who desire to be a "discipler" and following this we will provide ongoing opportunities for people to be discipled.

- **Sanctuary Renovation Project**

- At our last Sunday Huddle, we shared with you our desire to renovate the Sanctuary of the church. As we discussed, we have appointed two committees, one led by Gary Wehr and the other by Dave Horst, to provide the details of all this project entails. They have been meeting to gather the necessary information and costs for this project. We're currently still in the planning phase and will update the congregation as we put this proposal together. Fortunately, due to God's goodness and His moving in people's hearts to be generous, we are not starting from \$0. Due to reaching our goal in the \$100K Fund, we have some seed money to get started. It will obviously cost more than what is there, but it gets us started toward our vision of renovating the physical space we sit in on Sundays while God renovates our hearts towards greater discipleship.

IT'S 2025...HERE WE GO!

Respectfully submitted by:

Pastor Ted Rathman