



Chimes



A monthly newsletter from Grace United Methodist Church

January 2020



A Thank You from Gary Nims

My last day on staff at Grace Church is December 31. When Pastor Nate was appointed here, the Staff Parish Relations Committee decided it would be helpful for me to continue awhile as Pastor Nate came on board. Now the time has come for me to step back.

I appreciate the opportunities I've had to provide congregational care, serve as worship leader, preach, officiate at some weddings and funerals, and have input for other ministries of the church. Thank you.

Rita and I will continue to make Grace our home church. In order to help me live into a different relationship with the congregation, I have decided to take a brief pause from my participation for a few weeks after January 5. This is my personal decision, not suggested by Pastor Nate or the SPRC. So if you don't see me on Sunday mornings or at other times, know that it's not permanent!

Again, thank you for many kindnesses to me as part of the church staff.

The Disproportionate Criminal Justice Pipeline

More than 8,000 inmates are housed in Iowa's prison system. While the prison population increases about 1% annually due to new commitments, a large number of prisoners re-enter the system due to re-offending during supervision. A number of issues impact this at-risk population, including how they entered the criminal justice system and the barriers they face re-entering the community.

Join Church and Society for our Emerging Issues on Sunday, January 26, at 9 am in Fellowship Hall. Church and Society is excited to host Negus Sankofa Imhotep, Urban Dreams, and Robert Pate Jr., Inmate Movement Against Gang Evolution (IMAGE) to talk about the impacts of the disproportionality of the criminal justice system and how the community can help alleviate the barriers faced during re-entry.



Acolyte Training

Anyone in 3rd through 6th grades is invited and encouraged to join us on Sunday, January 13 at 11:30 am to learn more about being an acolyte. The acolytes are the young folks who light the altar candles each Sunday. They are responsible for bringing the light of Christ into the sanctuary, and then carrying it out into the world at the end of the service. Contact Coreen Witke for more information.

515.255.6400 ext.230;
coreenwitke@gracedesmoines.org



Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.

The people of The United Methodist Church™

January Sunday School Offering

January Sunday School offerings will support Children & Family Urban Movement (CFUM). The mission of CFUM is to create a community that supports the potential of children, youth, and families through educational success, healthy living, and community engagement. This program is held at Trinity UMC in Des Moines.

FINANCE REPORT

November 30, 2019

GENEROSITY—

With 92% of the year complete we have received 90% of anticipated income. A year ago we had collected 85% of the amount needed. The five year average at this point is 84%.

88% of Pledges have been received. Last year 87% had been received.

Non-pledged giving was 86% of the \$93,000 anticipated.

Other income was 98% of the \$63,962 anticipated.

DISBURSEMENTS—

88% of budgeted expenses were paid. The 5 year average is 81%.

Annual Conference Apportionments are not included in this year's budget, but \$2,845 has been paid by designated pledges. Last year \$7,404 had been paid to date. The annual apportionment is \$120,370.

John Mechem
Treasurer

2018 Annual Budget - \$654,417

2019 Annual Budget - \$608,185

FOUNDATION DISTRIBUTIONS FOR 2019

Earnings from the following endowments were transferred to the Administrative Council

Glen Robinson
Gene & Marilyn Leonard
Harold Wilson
Euletta Popp
Jane Bevington
Marie Hill
Ruth Biddle
Marjorie Canine
Other

\$ 18,718.03

Earnings from the following endowments were used for scholarships, Church Women United, special music, Super Wednesday, building repairs, operating budget, and to make Uni-Trust payments.

Cecil Bolsinger
Hartline/Funaro
Gladys Burkhead
Helen Young
Bob Young
Marie Hill
Merrill Blackburn
Art Jones
Virginia Haworth

\$ 46,187.50

Their generosity continues.
John Mechem, Treasurer

Mystery Worshipper Feedback

Summary by Ryan Christenson, Associate Director for Congregational Excellence, Iowa Conference of The United Methodist Church

Grace United Methodist Church and the Iowa Conference of The United Methodist Church contracted with Faith Perceptions to get an outsider's first-hand view of visitor experience at your worship services. Between September 29, 2019 and November 3, 2019, 11 persons who do not regularly attend church, and have never come to Grace before, were mystery guests who visited the church and provided feedback. Grace UMC and the Iowa Conference took the step to get visitor feedback because of the high priority of worship, along with the church's desire to connect with new people.

The mystery worshippers indicated the most important factors for whether they would return. These top three factors are the most common factors among most guests to churches:

- Friendliness – beyond the formal welcome of greeters and ushers, how did people welcome new people to worship?
- Message – the content of the sermon.
- Speaker – the style and delivery of the sermon.

Overall, the guests reported a positive experience. The top-rated categories include:

- Speaker – 6.45 out of 7 - the content of the sermon
- Message – 6.27 out of 7 - the style and delivery of the sermon
- Seating – 6.09 out of 7 - their comfort in the church sanctuary

One of the guests shared, "I cannot think of a way to make the message better." Pastor Nate's messages seemed to really connect with the guests. Beyond that, guests reported a very positive interaction with the formal greeters and ushers, as well as the church's website (often a point of contact before a person arrives at the church).

The three greatest areas for improvement include:

- Community awareness – 3.73 out of 7 – how aware are local businesses of the church?
- Signage – 4.55 out of 7 – how well do the interior and exterior signs direct new people?
- Willingness to Return to this Church – 4.73 out of 7

With all the positive feedback, these areas of improvement suggest a couple next steps. First, the church can make clearer where to park, perhaps even designating spaces for "visitor parking." With that, the church can take steps to make clearer which of the many entrances are best used for Sunday morning worship.

Additionally, the greatest opportunity is around "friendliness" towards visitors. One person wrote, "A lady nodded and smiled after the service as we were drinking coffee. That's it. Acknowledging my presence by talking to me would have made me feel welcome." Several others shared similar experiences.

The primary reason why people say they would come back to Grace is friendliness. A simple, "Good morning," "Glad you're here," or "Welcome," goes a long way. Taking time to speak and listen to someone you don't know can make the difference.

Celebrations of Grace

by Rev. Nate Nims, Senior Pastor 255-2131 ■ natenims@gracedesmoines.org

At the end of the year we have an opportunity to look forward to the future. To help us set goals for 2020 and have a better understanding of both our strengths and areas for improvement, Grace has participated in a Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT Survey) and recently partnered with Faith Perceptions to have 'Mystery Worshipers' join us at Grace and give our church feedback about their first impressions. Ryan Christenson, an Associate Director for Congregational Excellence, has written a bit about the Mystery Worshipers elsewhere in the Chimes, and we will be sharing information about the results in the new year.

The CAT Survey and Mystery Worshiper feedback showed three areas of passion for both our church and first time guests. Our congregation, and first time guests, experience the best of Grace when we have excellence in worship, strong community outreach, and a community shaped by uncommon hospitality.

Worship is important for us, and for our guests. In our worship services at Grace, we connect with God, with one another, and are inspired to make a difference in our lives and community. For many of us, worship helps to charge our batteries; our Sunday worship gives us the energy and passion to begin a new week. We are experiencing a renewed excitement in worship at Grace. In 2018, Grace averaged a worship attendance of 192, and this fall we have consistently had well over 200 in worship. On the Sunday, December 8, we had over 270 in worship, and on our Youth Sunday in November we had nearly 320 in worship!

To make sure that we can continue to have excellence in worship, we will keep doing what we do best. In my schedule, that means worship planning and sermon writing is one of my main priorities. Our music staff is incredibly talented, and I am grateful to work with them every week. We are starting to make plans for 2020, and I am excited to worship with you all next year.

The mystery worshipers that came to Grace were impressed with all that we do in our church and community. From our support of LGBTQ equality to our free clinic and meal, our guests recognized the difference that Grace is making in the community. In 2020, we all have the opportunity to be proud of our church and share with our friends and neighbors how Grace is being a faithful presence in Des Moines. Our passions, and the needs of the community, are met in the work of our church.

Both our CAT Survey and the feedback of our Mystery Worshipers showed that for the future of our church, we need to continue to develop better connections with one another by being a community of uncommon hospitality. Our Mystery Worshipers felt welcomed by our greeters and ushers, and while many felt warmly welcomed by the congregation, others felt like no one noticed them. To be a church with uncommon hospitality, we have to know that we're all responsible for hospitality.

If you see someone that is alone, especially if they're not someone you know or recognize, take the time to introduce yourself to them, even take the time to introduce them to others in our church and share a cup of coffee. We all know that it is great to connect with our friends or family on Sundays at Grace, but for us to be a church of uncommon hospitality, sometimes our friends and family can wait so that we can reach out and make a difference with our guests.

In 2020 and beyond, uncommon hospitality will also be found in our Sunday School classes and small groups. We are in the early stages of identifying needs for new groups, both on a long term and short term basis. I am looking forward to working with Coreen and our Christian Education committee to provide more opportunities for both faith formation and fun at Grace.

With Gary's retirement at the end of 2019, we will start the new year without a congregational care minister. I am thankful for all that Gary has done for Grace and the help that he has given me throughout the year. As we continue to receive pledges for 2020, our Finance and Staff Parish committees will be exploring the possibility of hiring an associate pastor. There is a chance that we will be able to have an associate pastor, however, we would need to receive many more pledges to make that possible. If you have turned in a pledge, thank you very much, and if you haven't yet, it's not too late, and your pledge makes a difference!

Since at the start of the new year we will not have a congregational care pastor, and I will be the only staff pastor at Grace, there are a few things I need you to know. Typically I do not answer my phone or emails on Fridays or Saturdays. That doesn't mean that I don't glance at my emails or check voicemail after someone has left a message, but it does mean that I take seriously my sabbath time and rest.

We have to take care of one another, and thankfully we already do that. Your support of one another is vitally important, and a visit from a friend is just as important, if not more important, than a visit from a pastor. If you would like to see me, please let the church know. Sometimes hospitals will let us know when our members are admitted, but not always. If you would like a visit, our church office needs to know that you are in need of a visit.

Finally, as we head into the new year I know that many of you are paying close attention to the future of the global United Methodist Church. As a delegate to the 2020 General Conference, I am paying close attention, too. Unfortunately the future of our denomination isn't clear. Numerous plans to dissolve our denomination will be debated at the next General Conference, as well as plans that will try to keep our denomination together. While many are passionate about the possibility of an inclusive United Methodist Church, others have made it clear that they will not be in an inclusive denomination, even if individual congregations get to decide if they will host weddings for LGBTQ persons or accept an appointment from an LGBTQ pastor. While the love and acceptance of all God's children is not the only issue that is threatening to divide the United Methodist Church, it has been used as a wedge for decades to bring us to this point.

While the future of the United Methodist Church may not be clear, the future at Grace is. We have new passion, energy, and excitement and are going to make the most of it. Our excellent worship, strong community outreach, and community shaped by uncommon hospitality will continue to make Grace thrive. No matter what happens in the global United Methodist Church, Grace will continue to offer grace to all. There may be stress, anxiety, and anger towards our denomination, and even towards the Iowa Annual Conference, for how they have treated LGBTQ persons. But that stress, anxiety, and anger does not get to define Grace. Our love, our care, our passionate welcome and inclusion does. Grace will only continue to be Grace when we share with our church and one another the love of God that makes all things new, the welcome and peace that is holy and faithful. No matter what happens to the United Methodist Church in 2020, I plan to be at Grace in 2021, and I hope you do, too.

Grace and Peace
Nate

www.gracedesmoines.org

Don Justo Coffee Returns

Starting in January, Theresa Sens will take over the coordination of the Don Justo Coffee with Dignity sales. There will be a few changes to the process:

- Orders will be taken the third Sunday of each month.
- Payment must be submitted when the order is placed. Checks should be made payable to "Don Justo Coffee". If payment is not received with your order, your order will not be processed.
- Orders may be picked up in the church office the following Sunday.

Watch for coffee samples, brochures, and order forms in the Narthex the first couple of Sundays in January, and learn more about Don Justo before you place your order. As their motto says, "Not just a cup of coffee... a JUST cup of coffee."

Preschool Highlights

December highlights in the preschool included celebrating Literacy Day, and making smoothies in the four-year-old UPK full day classroom using spinach as part of their "leaf project", as progress continued on the building renovation project.



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Website: www.gracedesmoines.org

Facebook: GraceDesMoines

Twitter: GraceDesMoines

Worship: Sunday 8 and 10:15 a.m.

Chimes Deadline

Submit complete articles for the next issue by the 15th of each month. Please send them to Charlene Hjort at charlenehjort@gracedesmoines.org.

View the Chimes on line and in color on our web site at:
www.gracedesmoines.org/newsletter.

Our Mission

Grace United Methodist is a community in Christ where a cross section of metropolitan Des Moines gathers for worship, study and service. At the core of our existence is Christ's vision for the world and the church. We are a servant people striving to live our lives so as to increase the Love for God and neighbor in the world. We are called:

- To tell God's story in fresh new ways through preaching and teaching.
- To practice uncommon hospitality.
- To equip and send servants into the larger community for Service.

Our Welcoming Statement

Each of us is a child of God worthy of God's love. In our diversity, we are created in God's image. In celebration of that good news, everyone is invited to join in worship and fellowship. This invitation is extended to all--people of all races, all ethnic backgrounds, all generations, all physical and mental abilities, all economic conditions, all sexual orientations--honoring the diversity of our faith journeys. We invite you to bless this church with your presence as God's grace is present in all creation.

STAFF LISTING

Senior Minister:

Rev. Nate Nims

Director of Christian Education:

Coreen Witke

Grace Preschool Director:

Kelly Donnelly

Office Manager:

Charlene Hjort

Custodian:

Tyler Caulfield

Director of Music and Organist:

Ann Gerdorn

Chancel Choir and Grace Chimers Director:

Michael Gookin

Chapel Choir Director:

Devon Steve

Chorister Choir Director:

Emily Miller

Grace Youth Coordinator:

Nathan DeLange

Grace Youth Assistant Coordinator:

Patty Link