

**Grace United Church of Christ  
Annual Report – December 6, 2015**

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**To Grace UCC from the desk of The Moderator –**

I am pleased to outline some of the changes that took place in 2015. We have some new Council members. Kelly Ospina came on board when Michael Steinbruck stepped down. From all of us, I want to thank Michael for all he did to help Grace define its mission and values. Kelly has already made major contributions by putting together a newsletter and an on line handbook. Christine Syltevik is our other new member, she has done a wonderful job in fulfilling the role of Financial Secretary from Bill Taylor who remains on Council as a Deacon. Stein Syltevik took on the position of Secretary for Geoff Marsh who also remains on Council as a Deacon.

Stein and Chris Levins have done a fantastic job in keeping our documents secure, organized and readily retrievable by taking us online through Google Docs. From that upgrade we are now able to hold our meetings virtually paperless. Yes, Grace Council is "Green".

Shelly O'Hara is our new Music Coordinator who took over for Dorothy who served Grace for 10 years. Thank you Dorothy for your commitment. With Shelly we also enjoy the musical talents of her boys, Liam and Noah, and her father, Bill.

Diane Bullman moved on from Toddler Care and Carol Johnson has put together a Story Circle time for those in 2nd grade and younger to best fill the needs of our members. It is working out great for the children, parents and grand parents. Thank you Carol.

We have started some traditions; most notably, the Anzano led Golf Outing and the Christine Syltevik led Koinonia retreat. Christine already has dates reserved for next year. Is it fair to say that Community Dinners are a tradition here at Grace? I think so, and want to thank Marianne Fimbel for keeping them going.

2015 was a busy and rewarding year. This is just a summary of some of the highlights.

Grace UCC continues to be involved in mission work within our community and beyond by participating in the Church has left the Building, The YMCA Coat Drive, Angel Patrol, Habitat for Humanity and Family Promise. This year we were able to help a family remodel their home to make it more handicap friendly through a United Church Home Grant. We are proud to sponsor Messiah. These are a few of the ways in which we give to those in need.

Every year we evolve. We define who we are and who we want to be. We continue to be a church that gives of ourselves through our mission work, through what we do for our community, and what we do for one another.

I want to thank our members for defining Grace UCC by living its values. When you walk into this church—regardless of who you are or where you are on life’s journey— you are welcome. This will never change. To our visitors and new members, we welcome you and look forward to sharing our spiritual journey with you.

Please take time to review our values that are detailed within this report to see what guides the things that we do.

Lets make 2016 another year of growth individually, and as a church.

God bless,

Mary Bernard

Moderator of Grace U.C.C.

Mary A. Bernard

## **Grace UCC Annual Report - Treasurer's Report– October 31, 2015**



### **Summary of 2015 Expenses and 2016 Budget:**

#### **Purchases this year:**

- We applied for a home renovation grant from United Church Homes. We received \$24,850, awarded to the Small family for renovation of their home for the benefit of their son Taylor.

#### **Ongoing savings reductions:**

- No new on-going savings

#### **Significant Budget Over Spends for 2015.**

- We overspent the Travel and Living Expenses due to an overnight trip to the Central Atlantic Conference that was attended by Dan, Bill and Peggy.

#### **2016 Budget Change Highlights:**

- The total budget for 2016 will be increased from \$120,000 to \$125,000 due to projected increases in giving.
- Staff Salaries will increase 2% to account for cost of living. Dan's pension will increase 9% to move us closer to UCC norms.
- Travel and Expense line increased from \$500 to \$2000 based on conference trips and support provided for Pastor Dan to attend church sponsored events (e.g. the church retreat) where there is cost and the Pastor is expected to be present.
- Increase in Staff expenses related to the new position of Music Coordinator.
- Reduction of Childcare Expenses coinciding with the elimination of this program for 2016 due to changing priorities.
- Changes in withholding and employer paid taxes due to slight increase in salaries and withholding choices

#### **Overall Cash on hand**

- At the end of 10/31/2013 we had \$46,924
- At the end of 10/31/2014 we had \$58,236
- At the end of 10/31/2015 we had \$79,972
- TD Checking: \$62,343
- TD Savings: \$11,008
- Edward Jones Money Market: \$3,436
- Edward Jones Equity Fund: \$3,185

Respectfully submitted,  
Michael Sisco – Treasurer

**BUDGET**

<b>Budget Summary</b>	<b>2015 Budget</b>	<b>Proj. 2015 EOY</b>	<b>Budget 2016</b>	<b>% Change for 2016 Budget</b>
Non-Staff Expenses	\$31,260	\$30,910	\$29,160	93.28%
Staff Expenses	\$76,174	\$80,646	\$84,150	110.47%
<b>Operational Expense</b>	<b>\$107,434</b>	<b>\$111,556</b>	<b>\$113,310</b>	<b>105.47%</b>
Operating Contingency	\$10,000	\$11,000	\$10,000	100.00%
Space for Grace Fund	\$2,566	\$3,000	\$1,690	65.86%
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>	<b>\$125,556</b>	<b>\$125,000</b>	<b>104.17%</b>
Income from All Offerings	\$120,000	\$125,000	\$125,000	104.17%
Income Other(Loans Repayments)		\$460	\$-	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>	<b>\$125,460</b>	<b>\$125,000</b>	<b>104.17%</b>
<b>Net Projected Budget Variance</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$(96)</b>	<b>\$-</b>	
<b>Budget Line Detail</b>				
<b>Non Staff Expenses</b>	<b>\$31,260</b>	<b>\$30,910</b>	<b>\$29,160</b>	<b>93.28%</b>
<b>Education: training and materials</b>	<b>\$500</b>	<b>\$400</b>	<b>\$500</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>Facilities Expense</b>	<b>\$17,460</b>	<b>\$17,823</b>	<b>\$17,360</b>	<b>99.43%</b>
Facilities Expense:Church Rent	\$8,200	\$8,100	\$8,200	100.00%
Facilities Expense:Computers and Network	\$100			0.00%
Facilities Expense:Internet and Phone	\$360	\$225	\$360	100.00%
Facilities Expense:Office Rent	\$8,400	\$8,400	\$8,400	100.00%
Facilities Expense:Office Supplies	\$400	\$583	\$400	100.00%
Facilities Expense: (Ramp)		\$516	\$-	
<b>Missions</b>	<b>\$9,500</b>	<b>\$9,376</b>	<b>\$9,400</b>	<b>98.95%</b>
Christian Childrens' Fund (Messia)	\$300	\$300	\$300	100.00%
Pennies & Nickels	\$600	\$450	\$500	83.33%
Missions and Allocation	\$8,100	\$8,200	\$8,100	100.00%
Local Outreach	\$500	\$426	\$500	100.00%
Loans	\$700	\$-	\$-	0.00%
<b>Worship and Programs</b>	<b>\$2,300</b>	<b>\$1,684</b>	<b>\$700</b>	<b>30.43%</b>
Sunday Worship (includes per diem pastor)	\$500	\$664	\$700	140.00%
Other Programs	\$500			0.00%
Nursery	\$1,300	\$1,020	\$-	0.00%
<b>Evangelism and Marketing</b>	<b>\$1,500</b>	<b>\$1,455</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>66.67%</b>
Advertising	\$1,200	\$1,455	\$1,000	83.33%
Website	\$-			0.00%
<b>Operation/Administrative</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$172</b>	<b>\$200</b>	
<b>Staff Expenses</b>	<b>\$76,174</b>	<b>\$80,646</b>	<b>\$84,150</b>	<b>110.47%</b>

## **Grace UCC Financial Secretary Annual Report for 2015**

This Annual Report is being submitted as of December 3, 2015.



### **Giving**

As of the end of November, donations to Grace UCC have been fairly consistent with the comparable period in 2014. Total donations from members, visitors and other individual supporters through the end of November were \$102,019. That is slightly more (1.6%) than our total donations budget of \$100,438 for that period.

The table below demonstrates the commitment our members and supporters have made to the improvement in the financial health of the church over the last 6 years.

<b>November YTD</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Cash donations</b>	\$83,245	\$87,962	\$89,846	\$90,261	\$90,055	\$95,026
<b>In-kind gifts</b>	\$1,234	\$1,971	\$2,041	\$4,101	\$3,077	\$3,186
<b>Total donations</b>	\$84,479	\$89,933	\$91,887	\$94,362	\$93,132	\$98,212

### **Sunday Worship Attendance**

Currently the church has about 100 voting members. While the exact attendance percentage changes slightly over the course of each year (summer time being the lowest attendance period), about 45% of the church members regularly attend Sunday worship services. The other 55% of church members are fairly infrequent attendees of Sunday worship services.

Attendance at Grace UCC Sunday worship services has begun to increase in 2015. The church is averaging about 42 people per Sunday worship service. The table below shows the details.

<b>Avg. Attendance</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>YTD 2015</b>
<b>Adults</b>	33.2	33.2	33.6	33.4	34.1	36.2
<b>Children</b>	4.2	5.1	7.4	6.5	5.8	5.9
<b>Total</b>	37.4	38.3	41.0	39.9	39.9	42.1

Respectively submitted,  
Christine Syltevik  
Financial Secretary, GUCC  
Christine.syltevik@gmail.com

## **2015 Annual Report- Pastor Report**

**Submitted by the Reverend Daniel J. Lundquist**



### **INTRODUCTION**

Over eleven years ago (December 4, 2004) we began the community of Grace United Church of Christ. Eleven years and many wonderful, exciting, and blessed things have happened in our community.

***Serving Justice, Loving Kindness:*** Grace UCC's mission statement is alive and well. We continue to refer to that statement, along with *No Matter Who You Are or Where You Are on Life's Journey You Are Welcome Here* as we name who and what we are as a church and community gathered together. It has been and continues to be an honor to work with each and every one of you. I truly believe Grace United Church of Christ takes to heart its mission and its vision. As such, we continue to be a welcoming and vibrant community.

The year 2015 has been an eventful one, filled with great worship experiences, confirmation, baptisms, bible studies, laity worship, council meetings, fellowship, interfaith gatherings, community dinners, breakfasts, and mission and outreach work- just to name a few.

### **WORSHIP/ SUNDAY**

The main change this year has been saying "goodbye" to Dorothy in the role of pianist, one she held since the beginning of Grace UCC. I cannot be more thankful for her time with us and am grateful she is still a part of the church and has been willing to substitute with her gifts as needed.

Shelly is now our music coordinator and we are grateful she has joined the ministry. We have been blessed with her gifts as well as she leads the church with our music programs.

This year we have seen the continuation and refinement of laity worship, where one Sunday per month (usually the last Sunday of each month) we are blessed with the laity leading every aspect of the worship experience. This has been met with wonderful praise as we not only hear and give witness to many different voices in the church but give testimony to the concept of "the priesthood of all believers". (If you would like to participate, let Kathleen S. know as she organizes these Sundays and we are fortunate to have her in this role.)

In conjunction with the laity worship, 2015 continues to have three licensed ministers preside at communion on those laity Sundays. This is a three-year cycle, with our being in the third year for Geoff Marsh, Chris Syltevik, and Bill Taylor as those in this role. If you are interested in being a licensed minister at Grace UCC for communion, please speak with Dan.

Thank you all for making Sunday such a wonderful experience!

In addition, to our Sunday worship we have also made a change in the children's area. As our childcare/ toddler provider over in the office (Diane) moved on, we decided to try a new arrangement. So, in the past months, we have had the children remain in worship and those 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and below leave after the Lord's Prayer and join Carol in the backroom for Story Circle. So far, I think this is a great change as we improve on our intergenerational worship experience and we better define the age group in the back room.

That being said, if there is anyone who is interested in putting together an educational program for those between the grades of 3-8, please let us know. An idea would be for this age group to be offered a class at the same time the 9-12 graders are meeting, over in the office around 10:15 am each Sunday morning before church.

## **MISSIONS**

As we worship, as we study and learn, we also reach out and help. A simple word for this is "mission".

Two of my favorite passages of the bible are a) Matthew 25: 31 ff. where we are encouraged to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit those in prison; and b) James 2: 14ff. where it states, "So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead." Both of these passages are prophetic and we here at Grace do a lot to make our faith not dead, but alive. Here are but some examples from 2011:

- Habitat for Humanity: we continue to support the local chapter (Raritan Valley) both financially and in our participation in at least one workday per year. Our last workday was in October...Look for more workdays in Lambertville. Thank you to all who are helping bring affordable and safe housing to those in need.
- Can Help: With the leadership of Ed, we have been saving our aluminum cans. With the money we have received from this, we have been able to give financial assistance to those in need for things like oil during the winter season.
- Pennies and Nickels: This continues to be a great and well-received program. Each Sunday there is a silver, "change bowl" that is sent around during the offering. In it is placed loose change that is later converted to the support of mission projects both local and global. The children are given a choice of projects to support- for example one year the children chose to give the money raised to *Feeding America* through which 7,200 meals were given.
- Relay for Life: Led by the Schupners we had a great team and great turn out this year. This year's Relay was held again at the Hunterdon Central Regional High School and we had a great time. Thank you!
- Family Promise (FP): Led by Bill T. we continue to help the homeless in Hunterdon County. From being a support church, to helping raise emergency funds, to helping with moves, we continued our assistance efforts to those in our community who are without homes and/ or struggling to make ends meet.
- Child Sponsorship: We, as a congregation, support a child named Messia via the Christian Children's Fund. You get a chance to support this effort each Sunday as a small bag with her name is passed around to the offering time.
- Flemington Food Pantry: Led by Elaine, we bring needed items for the local food pantry to church the last Sunday of each month. They are then brought to the pantry and distributed to those who are in need. We continue to see more and more support with this effort and it is

greatly appreciated. (If possible, try to remember to pick up a few items whenever you are at the grocery store and bring them to church...)

- Coalition for Peace Action: Led by Peter, we continue to be involved with supporting the peace coalition. We are also a co-sponsor of their yearly conference held in Princeton.
- SAFE in Hunterdon; Serving Women, Men and Families in Crisis: We continue to support this organization both with their annual candlelight vigil (clergy participation) and, this and in future years, their *Men in Heels* program.
- *Love the World: The Church Has Left the Building*: now in its third year for Grace UCC, we were involved with a multi-church (in both Pennsylvania and New Jersey) event where local mission projects are done to, in part, show the church and the community the need to “leave the building” and help neighbors more often (which Grace does a great job at!).

This year we supported this effort via a great gathering at Grow-a-Row where we helped glean many pounds of vegetables for those in need. (Thank you Bill T. for organizing this event.) The event culminated with a worship gathering at the Hopewell Presbyterian church where members from the churches involved gathered, sang and shared stories about how God touched them and their congregations during this event.

- Another wonderful mission project this year was our being able to obtain a grant which helped the Small family build a new ramp for Taylor as well as renovating a bathroom for him. Thank you!
- We are a “Five for Five” congregation which means we support the greater denomination (UCC) in their five wider offerings, which are:

**1: UCC Basic Support (OCWM- Our Church’s Wider Mission):** Provides funding from congregations for Conferences and the national ministries of the United Church of Christ (Wider Church Ministries, Local Church Ministries, Justice and Witness Ministries, General Ministries, and Pension Boards).

**2: One Great Hour of Sharing (Fourth Sunday in Lent):** Channels resources for international programs in health, education and agricultural development, emergency relief, refugee ministries, and both international and domestic disaster response, administered by Wider Church Ministries, Global Sharing of Resources.

**3: Strengthen the Church (Pentecost Sunday):** Supports leadership for new and revitalizing congregations, programs for youth and young adults, and leadership development for the whole church. UCC Conference and Local Church Ministries carry out these ministries.

**4: Neighbors in Need (First Sunday in October):** Supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States and Puerto Rico, including the Council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM), justice and advocacy, and direct service projects supported by Justice and Witness Ministries.

**5: The Christmas Fund (Sunday before Christmas):** Helps provide pension and health premium supplementation to low-income retired church workers, emergency assistance to clergy families in need, and Christmas checks to hundreds of annuitants, as administered by the Pension Boards.



## **FELLOWSHIP**

In addition to these mission projects we have wonderful fellowship. From potlucks, to breakfasts to dinners, we continue to develop and grow, in large part, because of the relationships we share and nurture. Of note:

- Community Dinners: Led by Marianne, 2015 brought to us our seventh series of community dinners. This is where Grace UCC members and friends hosted a dinner where others from the church gathered and shared community and a meal together. Thank you to all the wonderful hosts! The eight series will begin in 2016.
- Men's Breakfast: At least once per month, the men in the church are invited to gather for breakfast at the Country Griddle in Flemington. The socialization and laughter is very welcome.
- Koinonia Retreat: thanks to Chris S., many gathered at the Koinonia retreat center in New York for our second annual church retreat. A great time was had and we look forward to holding this event each year.
- Epiphany Party: held every year at Dan and Mary Kate's.

These mission projects and fellowship, their support and desire to continue to be involved with them come from our heart and our minds where we seek to be instruments of Christ's peace and love here on earth. To come to this point, in addition to our worship celebrations, mission projects, and fellowship, we gather on a regular basis for Christian and Religious Education.

## **EDUCATION**

- Story Circle during worship for those 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and below. Thank you Carol for hosting and sharing those important Bible stories!
- Teen Sunday School: Led by Bill, and Michaela, our teens (ages @13-18) are offered a Bible Study lesson before worship over at the church office from 10:00-10:45 am. This is a wonderful component of our church program and we are blessed to have it in our midst.
- Confirmation: this year we had a wonderful confirmation class led by Bill T. Julia M, Bridgett A., and Isabella L. met for a number of sessions, supported by their mentors, Christine O., Mary Kate L., and Michaela B. respectively, which culminated in their sharing personal faith statements during church. It was a great day and it was wonderful to see these young women grow in their faith.
- Adult Bible Study:
  - Wednesday morning (9:30 am.) adult study meets at Baker's Treat in Flemington.
  - Wednesday evening Bible Study meets at the church office at 7 pm.

These small groups continue to be great gatherings of support as we question, learn and process our faith and life journeys.

## **COUNCIL**

**None of the above could have happened without the ongoing support and vision of Grace UCC's council.**

Mary B. is our moderator. Mary's leadership has been a blessing and we have all benefited from her leadership.

Christine O. is our vice-moderator. She leads us well as well...

Stein S. is our secretary, replacing Geoff M. Thank you Geoff and welcome aboard Stein!

Mike S. is our Treasurer and we are blessed to have him continue to do all those things needed, oftentimes behind the scenes, of our church.

Christine S. has replaced Bill T. as our financial secretary. She has done a great job and we are so blessed to have her on the council.

Our deacons for 2015: Christine O., Bill T. (replacing Michael St.- thanks Michael!), Kathleen S., Stein S., Kelly O., Jeanne T., and Peggy T. Thank you to you all as you continue to help minister to the congregation. (Note here- in addition to the deacons, we have continued a prayer and support e-mail list that has turned out to be invaluable in its efficiency and effectiveness. To date, we have 47 people praying and supporting those who submit their requests. In addition, we are lucky to have Jeanne paying our bills and Kelly putting together and sending out our newsletter!)

Our trustees for 2015: Christine S., Mike S., Mary B., Geoff M., Stein S., and Chris L.

Of note: I am indebted to Chris L. for revamping and moderating the new web site. It is a wonderful site! We are very blessed to have him working on this on a regular basis.

Thank you all on the council for doing those things that are oftentimes done with little recognition.

**If you feel called to be a deacon or a trustee, feel free to contact Mary or myself. We would love to have you join the council!**

## **CONCLUSION**

A lot to report from 2015. All good, all blessings and all things for which we can be grateful. I apologize if I have left anyone out by name, as I most likely did.

What a great place, what a great vision. What a unique church. Doing church here in and of itself is a mission; being ***Open and Affirming is a mission***- let us never forget that. Let us never forget we did not exist until December of 2004. A lot of ground and growth has occurred in these past ten years. This is a place worthy of our time and our commitments. A place which tries to live its values which are:

**No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey you are welcome here.**

- We are guided by the teachings of Jesus.
- We make decisions with integrity in accordance with our beliefs.
- We act in the interest of peace and social justice.
- We promote and support opportunities for lay leadership.
- We conduct ourselves in a transparent and ethical manner.
- We maximize our community presence through collaboration and partnership.
- We continually act and reflect as we promote a learning culture.
- We nurture a community of extravagant welcome and hospitality.
- We celebrate our strengths and accomplishments and appreciate our fears and doubts.
- We embrace the diversity of each person's culture and spiritual journey.
- We seek out and use the knowledge and wisdom of our congregation in decision-making.

May we continue to live out these values as a church. May we point to them in all that we do and decide to do in the future. Lives have been transformed with each of the above points. We have discovered so many people's gifts. Let us continue to nurture each other's gifts. Let us continue to share these gifts with the larger community. Let us continue to define how we can continue to share these gifts and continue to be a place where truly **"no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here."**

This is a special and unique place. God bless. Let us continue to grow and to help transform others from worry to hope (great coat drive this past week- thank you!), from fear to love (Angel Patrol these next couple of weeks), from rejection to acceptance, from imprisonment to freedom. Let us continue to be agents of love, of salvation.

Respectfully and lovingly submitted,

Daniel J. Lundquist