

Grace United Church of Christ Annual Report – November 10, 2013



To Grace UCC from the desk of The Moderator-

This is our ninth year. It has been another year of growth in defining who we are and how we service our membership and our community. Some of the ways in which we have grown in 2013 are in lay services, local mission support and youth. Most notably, our laity services are well received and gives us all an opportunity to share our gifts and express our faith. We are more involved in mission work within our community. This was most recently demonstrated through the “Church has left the Building”, where we volunteered at Safe of Hunterdon, and we continue to become more involved with Family Promise. To better service our toddlers and their families, we now offer toddler care.

Every year we evolve as 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. This will be outlined in greater detail within this Annual Report.

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—it is apparent that everyone is welcome. This will never change. To our visitors and new members, we welcome you and look forward to sharing our spiritual journey with you.

Lets make 2014 another year of growth individually, and as a church.

Mary A. Bernard

Grace UCC Financial Secretary Annual Report for 2013

This Annual Report is being submitted as of November 7, 2013.

Giving

As of the end of October, donations to Grace UCC have grown 2.7% over the comparable period in 2012. Total donations from members, visitors and other individual supporters through the end of October were \$94,362. That amount is 1.4% higher than our budget of \$93,024 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.

October YTD	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Cash donations	\$76,240	\$75,212	\$83,245	\$87,962	\$89,846	\$90,261
In-kind gifts	\$1,984	\$1,623	\$1,234	\$1,971	\$2,041	\$4,101
Total donations	\$78,224	\$76,835	\$84,479	\$89,933	\$91,887	\$94,362

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 38% of the church members regularly attend Sunday worship services. The other 62% of church members are fairly infrequent attendees of Sunday worship services.

Attendance at Grace UCC Sunday worship services has grown slightly over the last six years. And the church is now averaging about 40 people per Sunday worship service. The table below shows the details.

Avg. Attendance	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	YTD 2013
Adults	31.8	35.3	33.2	33.2	33.6	33.5
Children	5.5	4.1	4.2	5.1	7.4	6.6
Total	37.3	39.4	37.4	38.3	41.0	40.1

Respectively submitted,



Bill Taylor, Financial Secretary, GUCC
taylorware1@comcast.net



Grace UCC Annual Report - Treasurer's Report– November 10, 2013

Please find attached the proposed 2014 Budget.

Some of the highlighted changes for this year are as follows:

- The total budget for 2014 remains flat at \$125,000. This is the same as 2013.
- Staff Salaries were increased 2% to account for cost of living. Dan's pension rises accordingly.
- The budget allows for a potential increase in office rent. We have not been approached, but the rent has not gone up since we've been there.
- We have replaced the pastors discretionary fund line item with a new item called outreach. This is for support of local needs that we have been encountering. To account for this some of the general mission budget has been reduced. However, overall mission budget is slightly increased.
- Worship and Programs has increased by \$1300 to account for ongoing toddler care on Sunday mornings.
- We have reduced the Evangelism and Marketing by \$1,400, from \$3,900 to \$1,500. We significantly underspent in this area and do not anticipate needing a higher amount based on other priorities. We also have dropped the Democrat advertising.

Michael Sisco
Treasurer, Grace United Church of Christ

GRACE UCC 2014 BUDGET

Budget Summary	2013 Budget	2013 EOY estimate	2013 Budget	% Change
Non-Staff Expenses	\$35,000	\$31,328	\$34,800	-0.57%
Staff Expenses	\$74,000	\$74,457	\$76,200	2.97%
Operational Expense	\$109,000	\$105,784	\$111,000	1.83%
Operating Contingency	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	0.00%
Space for Grace Fund	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$4,000	-33.33%
Total Expense	\$125,000	\$121,784	\$125,000	0.00%
Income from Offerings	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$125,000	0.00%
Income Other (Lease and Freezer)		\$1,810		
Growth Grant Allocated (or new)				
Total Income	\$125,000	\$126,810	\$125,000	0.00%
Net Projected Budget Variance	\$-	\$5,026	\$-	
Budget Line Detail				
Non Staff Expenses	\$35,000	\$31,328	\$34,800	-0.57%
Education and Training:Education Materials	\$500	\$604	\$500	0.00%
Facilities Expense	\$19,300	\$18,710	\$20,000	3.63%
Facilities Expense:Church Rent	\$8,200	\$8,200	\$8,200	0.00%
Facilities Expense:Computers and Network	\$600	\$-	\$600	0.00%
Facilities Expense:Internet and Phone	\$1,400	\$1,710	\$1,700	21.43%
Facilities Expense:Office Rent	\$8,400	\$8,400	\$9,000	7.14%
Facilities Expense:Office Supplies	\$700	\$400	\$500	-28.57%
Missions	\$9,700	\$9,856	\$10,000	3.09%
Christian Childrens' Fund (Messia)	\$300	\$300	\$300	0.00%
Pennies & Nickels	\$600	\$600	\$600	0.00%
Missions and Allocation	\$8,600	\$8,200	\$8,100	-5.81%
Pastors Discretionary (Out Reach)	\$200	\$756	\$1,000	400.00%
Worship and Programs	\$1,600	\$917	\$2,800	75.00%
Sunday Worship (includes per diem pastor)	\$1,000	\$300	\$1,000	0.00%
Other Programs	\$600	\$42	\$500	-16.67%
Nursery		\$575	\$1,300	
Evangelism and Marketing	\$3,900	\$1,240	\$1,500	-61.54%
Advertising		\$1,000	\$1,200	
Website		\$240	\$300	
Staff Expenses	\$74,000	\$74,457	\$76,200	2.97%
Staff Expense:Salaries	\$62,300	\$62,300	\$63,700	2.25%
Staff Expense:Employer Paid Taxes	\$2,000	\$2,437	\$2,500	25.00%
Staff Expense:Balance Point payroll fees	\$1,500	\$1,329	\$1,500	0.00%
Staff Expense:Insurance	\$2,400	\$2,462	\$2,500	4.17%
Staff Expense:Pensions (Dan)	\$5,000	\$5,149	\$5,200	4.00%
Staff Expense:Travel and Expense	\$800	\$780	\$800	0.00%

STATEMENT OF 2013 FINANCES

We started the fiscal year with a balance of \$28,249 in TD Bank Checking and \$7108 in a CD at Everbank. Through generous giving and the leasing of the office space, we have increased our operating fund by \$9567 and Space for Grace by \$2000, leaving us with a total cash on hand of \$46,924. At this point in time, we have every expectation that we will end the year either at or under budget.

TD Bank Summary	
Beginning Checking Balance 2013	\$28,249.00
Income from Offering	\$91,308.00
Income from sub-leased on office	\$1,400.00
Expenses	\$83,141.00
Net Loss/Gain	\$9,567.00
Transfer CD Everbank to TD bank	\$7,108.00
Beg Balance Space for Grace Fund	\$-

TD Bank Checking Balance – 10/31/2013	\$44,924.00
TD Bank – Space for Grace	\$2,000.00

Total Cash on 10/31/2013	\$46,924.00

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Sisco – Treasurer

**Grace United Church of Christ
Annual Report – November 10, 2013**



Pastor Report

Submitted by the Reverend Daniel J. Lundquist

INTRODUCTION

Almost nine years ago we began the Grace UCC church. Nine 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 2013 has been an eventful one, filled with great worship experiences, Bible studies, Grace Café's, laity worship, council meetings, fellowship, community dinners, breakfasts, and mission and outreach work- just to name a few themes.

WORSHIP/ SUNDAY

This year we have seen the addition 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, 2013 has also seen the addition to Grace of having licensed ministers preside at communion on those laity Sundays. With the vote of council and the approval of the New Jersey Church and Ministry Commission, Grace UCC has three licensed ministers approved to preside at communion at Grace UCC only and only for three years. This three-year cycle we have Geoff Marsh, Chris Syltevik, and Bill Taylor as those in this role. If you are interested in being a licensed minister at Grace UCC in the future, please speak with Dan.

We have been, and continue to be blessed to have such wonderful **music** talent. We are led by Dorothy who does a great job each Sunday sharing her gifts with us. Other talent in this area is shared of course by Howard, Michael, Jack, Chris L., Duncan, Mike, Kim, Charlie and Bev. We look forward to more musical talents in the future!

Thank you all for making Sunday such a wonderful experience!

MISSIONS

In addition to these partnered mission projects we continue to find many ways to move from thinking about our faith to acting on our faith. 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. 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 around \$1,000 per year 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: We did not participate this year as our group leader Alice moved out of the area. A new team however will be formed in 2014!
- Family Promise (FP): Led by Bill T. and Melissa R. 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.

- Iguana Coffeehouse: More are in the works.
- 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. In addition, the children, during Sunday School, have been sending Messia cards on a regular basis- thank you!
- 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...)
- Heifer International: Thanks to Mike S., Christine O, and Bridget A. we added a great project to our Thanksgiving season. Many animals were purchased and donated and we are doing this project again this Thanksgiving season.
- Coalition for Peace Action: Led by Peter, we continue to be involved with supporting the peace coalition.
- 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.
- *Walk the Talk; the Church Has Left the Building*: New to Grace UCC this year, we were involved with a multi-church 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 coat drive and helping to clean a SAFE residence.
- 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 comparison 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, 2012 brought to us our fifth 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 sixth series will begin in the New Year.
- 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.
- Women's Gatherings: a monthly soup gathering began this year...thank you Mary Kate.
- This year we also saw the beginning of what has been termed the *Neighborhood Dinner*. Thank you Geoff and Chris and others for taking the lead on this one...this is still in its early phases and hopefully will grow into the future.

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

- Sunday School: Every Sunday morning (for a short time during worship) the children (age 12 and under) are offered a Sunday School lesson. Thanks to our wonderful leader Carol J. our children are learning about God, about the Bible, about what it means to be a church, about our loving and inclusive God. It is great to see the teachers have the freedom to use the lesson in the manner they are most comfortable and in which they use their knowledge and creativity. The children love this time and all involved are giving of their gifts in a wonderful way. Thank you.
- A wonderful addition this year is the Toddler Care program over at the office. Now, if parents choose, they can leave their toddler over at the church office so the parents can be more present in worship. Thank you Jeanne for taking on the leadership in this area.
- Teen Sunday School: Led by Bill, our teens (ages 13-18) are offered a Bible Study lesson before worship over at the church office from 10:00-10:45 am. We are in the process of adding a Confirmation component to this time. This is a wonderful component of our church program and we are blessed to have it in our midst.

- Adult Bible Study:

- Wednesday morning (10:00 am.) adult study meets at Garden Salad in Flemington.

- Wednesday evening Bible Study meets at the church office at 7 pm. And we continue with the *Journey through the Bible* series.

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

MARKETING

This year has also brought us a new web designer and master in Chris L. Stay tuned to a new web site run by Chris for Grace UCC!

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. She and her husband Paul were instrumental in updating our Safe Church Policy this year. Thank you Christine!

Geoff M. is our secretary. We continue to be grateful to Geoff for his willingness to take on this very vital role.

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.

Bill T. continues to be our financial secretary (I use the same words here as last year's report). Using one of Bill's words, he does an *outstanding* job. From envelopes to tallies, to pie charts and numbers, Bill's gifts are welcomed and needed.

Our deacons for 2013: Christine O., Ed F., Michael St. (who also did the *Grace Cafe*- (and is doing one today) an annual event that is helping us hone our values and beliefs as we move forward as a congregation), Kathleen S., Stein S. and now Jeanne 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 32 people praying and supporting those who submit their requests.)

Our trustees for 2013: Bill T., Mike S., Mary B. and Geoff M. Thank you for doing those things that are oftentimes done with little recognition.

In addition, our council meetings now are more efficiently run via a team concept, one initiated by Michael St. and appreciated by all.

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 2013. 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 nine years. This is a place worthy of our time and our commitments.

This year, via council meetings, retreats, and Grace Cafes we put together the following list of Grace UCC's values:

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, from fear to love, 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