

GRACE CHURCH

ANNUAL REPORT



Annual Meeting and Celebration
October 15, 2023 | 6:30pm
Hosted at Grace McKean

2022 - 2023

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A LETTER FROM PASTOR DEREK

Dear Grace Church,

I'm not trying to freak anyone out, but whether you know it or not, Grace Church is in a season of transition. Here is a sampling of a few notes I've written in some recent strategic planning sessions.

"Churches can be a victim of their own success. It's possible to be going up and to the right and a nail is already in the coffin."

"Have we created a false finish line for what we expect of maturing disciples at Grace?"

"Would we rather have 2,000 volunteers to help us do what we want them to do, or equip 2,000 visionaries who are hell-bent on doing what God has called them to do?"

So yes, I'm doing some soul-searching about the future of Grace, and I'm doing it together with a team of about 15 of our staff and volunteer leaders. And it's a little strange because by all accounts, things are going very well! We set some attendance records this year. To be honest I had given up hope that we would ever get back to pre-2020 numbers. But we did. ServErie is re-surging, Grace Leadership Institute is empowering leaders all over our region, our new studio is completed and we're ready to multiply life-changing content all over the world. Things are going very well.

Yet, amid all the momentum, I have been sensing the need to shift our model. To figure out how to double down on our mission to make disciples, specifically the kind of disciples who are equipped to fulfill our mission in the Lake Erie region for the next decade. We are not creating fans of Jesus, we are not creating

church consumers, we are not creating culture warriors, we are creating fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. People who know where they fit into God's story in the world and are able to connect the dots for others who are struggling to find their place in that story.

So, WOW! we have a lot to celebrate and reflect on from a great year in 2022-23. We also have a lot to look forward to going forward. One thing we know in the midst of it all, God has been so faithful to us. While methodologies change through the years, He does not. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

This year's annual celebration will be a can't miss event and as a member of the Grace family – I'd urge you to be there. We will put a stake in the ground and mark God's faithfulness up until now and we will talk about what's next on our journey together. I love you guys so much.

I'm honored to be your pastor.



Pastor Derek

AGENDA

2022 - 2023 Annual Meeting Agenda

October 15, 2023

Pastor Derek Welcome

Recognition of New Members

(see page 10 for complete list)

Convening of Meeting: Bill Hunter

Minutes of Previous Meeting: Bill Hunter

MOTION: That the church approve the minutes from the 2021-2022 Annual Meeting (page 3)

Presentation of Elections Ballot/Vote: Pastor Derek Sanford

MOTION: That the church approves the names on the ballot for election to office (page 9)

Presentation of Pastoral Ordination of Mike Crisman: Pastor Derek Sanford

MOTION: That Grace Church ordain Mike Crisman as a minister of the gospel, upon unanimous recommendation of the Elders (page 15).

2022-2023 Financial Report and 2023-2024 Budget: Aaron Lundberg

Pastoral Ordination: Elders and Congregation

Closing of Meeting: Bill Hunter

Year-In-Review Video

Pastor Derek Message

Worship & Prayer

MINUTES

MOTION: That the church approve the minutes from the Annual Meeting.

Annual Celebration 2021-2022
Minutes | October 2, 2022
Grace McKean

The 2022 Annual Meeting was called to order by Elder Chair Tom Hesch at 6:41pm.

- ☛ A motion was made to approve the minutes from the 2020-2021 Annual Meeting by the Elders of Grace Church. Second by Darlene Leonard. No discussion. Motion was approved unanimously.

Elder Elections

- ☛ Derek made a presentation of the elections ballot. Ballots were handed out when members entered the worship center. Voting is for members only. The three Elders listed below are up for Re-Election. They are seeking another Two-year term. Elders can serve up to six total years:
Tom Hesch, Doug Nelson, and Skip Papa
- ☛ The Following are nominated to join the Elder Team as new lay Elders:
Mike Alabran and Cleve Wright
- ☛ Tom Hesch asked for the motion to approve these names on the ballot for office. The motion to approve the names on the ballot for the offices was made by The Elders. Second by Ron Glassman. No discussion. Motion was approved unanimously.
- ☛ Pastor Derek discussed the process and reasoning for Pastoral Licensing. Mike Crisman was recommended for Pastoral licensing this past year. Derek introduced Mike Crisman and his role at Grace Church. Mike is the Site Pastor at Grace Harborcreek. Mike completed his Masters of Divinity degree this summer.
- ☛ That Grace Church License Mike Crisman as a minister of the gospel, upon unanimous recommendation of the Elders. This vote was done on the ballot card. This motion was made by the Elders. A second was made by Megan Glassman. Votes will be announced at the end of the meeting.

Financial Report

- ☺ Aaron thanks staff and leadership for all they do. He also thanks TJ as the Treasurer of Grace Ministries Finance Team.
- ☺ Explains Finance Team meets monthly to discuss procedures and policies, along with budget and reserves.
- ☺ Aaron begins discussing Generosity of ministry year 2022. Total giving is just over \$3.7 million.
 - ☺ Slide #1 was shown.
- ☺ Annual Report- Total Giving amount includes Ministries/Operations, Transform, Mission, Debt reduction, and Benevolent
- ☺ Operating Revenue standpoint shows we are up compared to what was budgeted by just over \$350,000.
- ☺ Giving Units are down in numbers. Per Unit Ministry Giving Average per household- Average giving \$3003. (History \$2370, 2609, 2264, 2243, 2311, 2150, 1996)
- ☺ Total Giving is \$3254 (History \$2808, 2831, 2766, 2562, 2558) average (includes all giving)
- ☺ TJ discusses Resource Allocation (Slide #2) of Operating Expenses.
 - ☺ Global Missions is down in both revenue and expense because general missions giving has been down, and there have been no mission trips.
 - ☺ 2022 Operating and surplus after budgeting for deficit shows Operating Revenue exceeded budget by \$358,720; Operating Expense exceeded budget by \$159,362 due to expenses for larger projects. This resulted in a surplus before non-cash items of \$140,789.
 - ☺ Reserves: Total Reserves of \$1,002,410. Breakdown of reserves is Transform-\$366,677; Reserves- \$560,435 (approx. \$180K for operating); Benevolence-\$75,298.
 - ☺ Aaron then discussed highlighted projects which included the Studio Project and Graces Kids space at HC, and Office Space at HC.
 - ☺ Aaron then thanked everyone for their generosity and concluded this portion.
- ☺ 2023 Ministry Year Budget
 - ☺ Budget supports each ministry missions for the year and will continue to build Operational and Capital Reserves while achieving the ministry and vision that God has called us to.

- ☺ This was reviewed by Finance Team for the proposal to Elders which was approved by the Elders
- ☺ With Grace Sites, the Giving Contributions are budgeted as usual but did have a slight increase mostly from new online and TV market projection. The increase was at 1.8% in Gen Contributions.
- ☺ GLI has revenue coming in, but Grace Ministries is seeding 100K to help cover expenses and it's part of a 3 year funding strategy.
- ☺ ServErie - we are now beginning a charge where ServErie pays a percentage of expenses including programming, creative, operations and support, insurance, legal services, security, etc. for support provided by the Grace Ministries' cross functional team.

☺ TJ discusses 2023 Operating Budget

- ☺ Deficit was discussed after ending the year
- ☺ Operating Revenue Budget: \$3,546,187 up slightly from 2022. Operating Expense budget: \$3,339,214, up from prior year. Surplus before non-cash items: \$206,973
- ☺ Depreciation increased due to addition of many new depreciable assets from larger projects that were completed in 2022, or will be completed in 2023.
- ☺ Deficit after non-cash items: (\$369,027). Reasons for deficit: Accounting is in a new depreciation structure. We projected super conservatively on giving still because of uncertainty until we see some normalcy. Feeling confident Grace will exceed giving and deficit will not be as large.

☺ TJ discusses Financial Position Slide #3

- ☺ Financial Health and stability are excellent here at Grace.
- ☺ Highlighting of some items that will help long term. 12.5 million in assets – Things like Cash, buildings etc. 7.9M in equity (assets minus debt and liabilities) in for profit terms this would be called “net worth” – this is up from 7.7 last year at this time. 4.6M in Liabilities include 3.6M of the mortgage. To simplify, if Grace were to payoff all its liabilities with its assets, there would be 7.9M leftover.

☺ Aaron discusses Loan Payable Slide #4

- ☺ Efforts to pay down debt and differences made since 1st quarter of 2020.
- ☺ The right balance is being used in continuing to put money toward ministry and also be attentive to needs as they come up in community and church.
- ☺ We also have been paying extra on the mortgage on top of the giving that comes in for debt reduction.

☺ Overall, we feel we are continuing to position ourselves in wise ways that will balance ministry that overflows, managing reserves, planning for upkeep and new strategies as well as paying off debt

☺ In the long term, we will have greater ripple effects for the Kingdom.

☺ Derek Sanford announced the voting results for Elders, Officers, and Mike Crisman Pastoral Licensing. The votes were tabulated, and all elders and officers were affirmed into their positions and Mike Crisman was affirmed as a pastor at Grace Church. Mike was gathered around by Elders and himself and his family were prayed over. Acts 28:8 was read by Derek. Mike was commissioned in.

☺ Tom Hesch closed the business portion of the meeting at 7:20pm. A motion was made to close the business portion of the meeting. First by Aaron Lundberg, and second by Nate Burr.

2022 Ministry Year Financial Report

2022 GIVING SUMMARY

	Actual	Budget	Difference
Total			
Ministries/ Operations	3,340,993	2,925,325	415,668
Transform	216,627		216,627
Missions	90,460	147,408	(56,948)
Debt Reduction	25,766		25,766
Benevolent	73,570		73,570
Giving Total	3,747,416	3,072,733	674,683

2022 MINISTRY YEAR - SITES

Gift Range	Ministries/Operations	All	
\$1-499	31.3%	20.1%	
\$500-999	13.1%	25.8%	
\$1000-4,999	36.2%	35.4%	
\$5000-9,999	11.9%	11.7%	
\$10,000+	7.4%	7.0%	
Total Giving Units:	1,080	1,136	<i>(giving units = households)</i>
Average Gift:	\$3,003	\$3,254	

2022 OPERATING SUMMARY

	Actual	Budget	Difference
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE:	3,431,453	3,072,733	358,720
Operating Expenses			
Personnel	1,556,863	1,579,598	(22,735)
Ministries	437,371	448,672	(11,301)
Operations	917,025	650,958	266,067
Missions	210,332	283,001	(72,669)
Total Operation Expense	3,121,591	2,962,229	159,362
Surplus/(Deficit) Before Non-Cash Items:	309,862	110,504	199,358
Depreciation:	538,569	480,000	(58,569)
Surplus/ (Deficit) after non-cash items	(228,707)	(369,496)	140,789

Transform: \$ 366,677

Reserves: \$ 560,435

Benevolence: \$ 75,298

Restricted & Designated Funds: \$ 1,002,410

Debt Balance: 3,637,557

2023 Ministry Year Budget

Total Operating Revenue	\$3,546,187
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Operating Expense

Personnel	\$1,877,003
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Ministries	\$429,529
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Operations	\$846,618
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Missions	\$186,064
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Total Operating Expense	\$3,339,214
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Surplus/ (Deficit) before non-cash items:	\$206,973
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Depreciation:	\$576,000
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Surplus/ (Deficit) after non-cash items	(\$369,027)
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BALLOT

2023-2024 Ballot

Motion - that the church approves the names on the ballot for election to office.

ELDERS



1 | Tom Hesch
(Elder Chairman)



*2 | Bill Hunter
(Church Chairman)



1 | Doug Nelson



1 | Skip Papa



*2 | Dennis Wagers



1 | Mike Alabran



1 | Cleve Wright



Aaron Lundberg



Bernie Farabaugh



Jim Scarpitti



Scott Michel

TREASURER



*2 | T.J. Hesch

LEGEND

- * On the ballot for a vote
 - 1 One-year term
 - 2 Two-year term
- - New on the ballot
- - Previous Elder

MEMBERSHIP

NEW MEMBERS

Brent Aller
Cheryl Baldwin
Barbara Beardsley
Rodney Beardsley
Karen Bensink
Scott Bensink
Rita Bidwell
Sherry Brinager
Cara Buis
Pete Buis
Kristy Calvert
James Clark
Meg Crisman
Jim Crisman
Jacob Fitzgerald
Roberto Gonzalez
Stacy Gonzalez
Jennifer Greer
Veronika Gromov
Nancy Gruver
Michelle Hackett
Jane Kravtsov
Ellen Kucharik
Mary Manross
Lynford Manross
Luke Mariotti
Timothy Mast
Kristy Mazza
Teresa McDaniel
Tom McDaniel
Kylie Morris
Veronica Osterberg
Richard Orozco
Karen Orozco
Dolly Pitto

Grace Scarlett
Howard Sissem
Jennifer Straub
Joseph Straub
Aaron Troyer
Dawn Troyer
Stephanie Turner
Gail Wolf
Doug Wolf

MEMBERS REMOVED

The following members have been removed at their request:

Glenna Bartlett
Anna Bentley
Zach Bentley
Ron Dush
Martha Dush
Howard Gorman
Betty Hellman
James Hellman
Debbie Lewicki
Paul Mirone
Priscilla Mirone
Rita Reilly
Andrea Shilling
Amy Swartzfager
Kristen Tiernan
John Tiernan
Karen Walker

**Please contact us if we have accidentally omitted or added your name. We sincerely apologize for any oversight!*

Amy@whoisgrace.com

FINANCIALS

2022-2023 Financial Report



2023 GIVING SUMMARY

	Actual	Budget	Difference
Total			
Ministries/ Operations	3,479,938	3,342,824	137,114
Transform	97,530		97,530
Missions	116,456	106,800	9,656
Debt Reduction	23,011		23,011
Benevolent	95,666		95,666
Giving Total	3,812,601	3,449,624	362,977

2023 MINISTRY YEAR - SITES

Gift Range	Ministries/Operations	All	
\$1-499	27.9%	28.5%	
\$500-999	14.2%	14.5%	
\$1000-4,999	37.3%	36.9%	
\$5000-9,999	12.6%	12.2%	
\$10,000+	7.9%	7.7%	
Total Giving Units:	1,073	1,107	(giving units = households)
Average Gift:	\$3,075	\$3,302	

2023 OPERATING SUMMARY

	Actual	Budget	Difference
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE:	3,615,570	3,546,187	69,383
Operating Expenses			
Personnel	1,741,083	1,850,076	(108,993)
Ministries	432,410	547,621	(115,211)
Operations	774,061	723,566	50,495
Missions	251,034	217,952	33,082
Total Operation Expense	3,198,588	3,339,215	(140,627)
Surplus/(Deficit) Before Non-Cash Items:	416,982	206,972	210,010
Depreciation:	551,674	576,000	24,326
Surplus/ (Deficit) after non-cash items	(134,692)	(369,028)	234,336

Transform: \$16,090

Reserves: \$281,173

Benevolent: \$27,330

Restricted Total: \$324,593

Debt Balance: 3,339,471

If you would like to see greater budget detail or have questions, please contact:
Aaron Lundberg (814.480.0189 or aaron@whoisgrace.com).

2024 Ministry Year Budget

Total Operating Revenue **3,661,534**

Operating Expense

Personnel 1,934,726

Ministries 497,721

Operations 812,326

Missions 167,422

Total Operating Expense **3,412,195**

Surplus/ (Deficit) before non-cash items: **249,339**

Depreciation: **540,000**

Surplus/ (Deficit) after non-cash items **(290,661)**

ORDINATION

PASTORAL ORDINATION

Motion: That Grace Church Ordain Michael Crisman as a minister of the Gospel upon unanimous recommendation of the Ordination Council.

This year, Grace has the privilege to ordain Mike as a minister of the Gospel. Mike is the site pastor for Grace Harborcreek. Mike received a license to perform pastoral duties last year and has now proceeded to fulfill the requirements for full Ordination. In our tradition, Ordination is the responsibility of the local church. It does not happen at the seminary level or the denominational level, but each church has the authority to ordain pastors.

Ordination is recognition of a calling to ministry, confirmation of the presence of the gifts necessary for ministry, and authorization of the ordained person to preach and teach the Gospel. It does not confer special spiritual rank or power. Ordination is to an office and not to status. The church ordains individuals because God has already ordained them to serve Him: "...so that the body of Christ may be built up..." (Ephesians 4:11-13).

The steps in the process of Ordination are:

1. The candidate writes a doctrinal paper and call to ministry. He submits it to the elders and members of an ordination council.
2. The elders call an "ordination council" of ordained ministers to examine the candidate's doctrinal paper and call to ministry. Upon successful defense of the paper, the council recommends to the church that the candidate should be ordained. Mike's council included Derek Sanford, Dan Nold, Mark Hinman, Brian Weber, Jean Kuebler, and Keith McGarvey. Rev. Brian Weber motioned that Mike Crisman be ordained to lifelong vocational gospel ministry. Rev. Jean Kuebler seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

A word from Mike Crisman:

I'm originally from Champaign, IL, and attended Purdue University in Indiana (I'm a proud Boilermaker!). While in school, I participated in ROTC and, upon graduation, was commissioned into the Marine Corps and served on active duty for seven years. With the birth of my first daughter, Sophia, my wife Emily and I decided to change careers in the summer of 2020. I accepted a position with Erie Insurance.

While I grew up in a Christian home, it was always something I did, not who I was. It wasn't until college that I embraced Jesus' work on my behalf. After graduating, I decided that if I was going to be a Christian, I wanted to know what I was signing up for. So, I began taking some online bible classes through Moody Bible Institute's Seminary. Over the years, I took a class or two at a time. Eventually, I crammed a 3-year degree into nine years and finally finished my Master's of Divinity in the summer of 2022!

When Emily and I landed in Erie, God's providence led us to Grace Church, where we quickly got involved and got introduced to Pastor Scott. Over time, God revealed and refined my calling into ministry. After being affirmed by Scott, the process to become Grace Harborcreek's next site pastor happened quickly. I'm stoked to continue serving and serving with this congregation!

When not working, I'm often with my wife and young daughters (Sophia is almost four years old, and Isabel is almost two years old). However, in the unlikely event I find myself with free time, I'm probably pursuing one of my hobbies. I'm a novice hunter and an aspiring mediocre golfer.

2022-2023 GRACE CHURCH MINISTRY UPDATES

SERVERIE

SERVERIE

Kerrie Grande, Program Director



2023 has been a year of transition for ServErie. I am so excited to be here and a part of the team. And we genuinely believe we are on a great trajectory! We are returning to our roots and reclaiming our original core competency: volunteer mobilization. We love the Erie region and are committed to partnering with organizations, schools, local churches, and non-profits to work toward our missions together: to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the places where we live and work.

Here is a snapshot of some of our greatest moments from this past year:

First, we sprang into action with a ServErie Saturday event in April. We had over 250 volunteers that served at 17 local agencies. These volunteers braved the rain and cold and did amazing work at their sites. It turned out to be an awesome day!

In partnership with Grace Ministry's Development Lead, Jeannine Thompson, we jumped into hosting our annual ServErie Gala in May 2023. Our event had a great community turnout and raised over \$33,000.00! We also leveraged Erie Gives Day, where local non-profits can partner with the Erie Community Foundation to maximize donations made in one day. That day, ServErie showcased our desire for partnership and relationship building within the community and some places where those roots are already taking place. Erie came out to support us in a big way. Through their generosity, we surpassed our goal again!

We also had a fun opportunity to partner with Erie Fitness Academy at their annual golf outing. They reached out and generously asked ServErie to be the recipient of the funds raised at this event, which was over \$4000.00. Seventy-five teams participated. They had a great time golfing while we were able to share with them the mission of ServErie. We loved working with the team from Erie Fitness Academy and creating a new partnership with them. We are already looking forward to next year!

Then, in July, we hosted our annual ServErie Summer Project. We partnered with nine agencies/non-profits/schools/churches over 2.5 days. We also invited pastors from area churches to come out and pray over each session of the Summer Project. It was incredible to meet so many new people from the Erie faith community and plant those seeds of community and relationship through ServErie! The agencies we partnered with on one or more of the summer project days were Edison Elementary School, Boys and Girls Club, Erie Center for Arts and Culture, Land Lighthouse, Love Your Block/City of Erie, Soldiers and Sailors Home, McKinley Elementary, Peiffer-Burleigh Elementary, and B.E.S.T. Our volunteers showed up in a huge way. We had a great time tackling some big projects and serving in our community!

As you can see, the last year has been quite exciting for ServErie! So many activities and events in just a few months. We know that all those numbers we listed above represent more than they show on the surface. At a deeper level, they represent opportunities to connect and build relationships with our community, which is where our heart here at ServErie lies. We are so expectant and excited about what God has planned for us this next year. Thanks to all for helping us serve Erie so well!



GRACE
LEADERSHIP
INSTITUTE



GRACE LEADERSHIP INSITITUTE

Melanie Deppen, Executive Director

Reflecting on the past year, I am reminded of the people God has provided to help at Grace Leadership Institute (GLI). I am so grateful for all the skills, talents, wisdom, and grace as we work together to build this learning arm of the church. GLI had a good year of growth as we conducted our 2nd full year of learning opportunities. We experienced changes, improvements, and additions to our team, programs, faculty, and students, involvement with other churches, community speakers, and building use by other organizations. We are excited to build and refine our programs, events, and awareness so we can Learn and Leverage Christ-like Leadership Together with others in our community.

The GLI Team grew to 11 dedicated volunteers that support GLI specifically. We added new roles of RCC program manager, Registrar, GLI admin, and digital marketing team leader. We also changed leadership for the Leadership One Day team. We added a member to the Regional Church Collaborative Advisory team.

Courses

From Fall 2022 to Spring 2023, six courses were offered through the School of Ministry and Leadership Development Center. And we have 12 courses scheduled now for Fall 2023 – Spring 2024. All are available either for grade or to audit. We have engaged seven faculty members to teach our courses from higher education institutions, including Grove City College, Winebrenner Seminary, Southwest Baptist University, Houghton University, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, and long-term pastors. There were 65 in attendance at classes this past year, representing 51 unique students, with some taking multiple courses. Four students took three courses, and one took four courses! We have two students enrolled in the Theology and Church Leadership Certificate program. Plus, we celebrated the four students who completed all three Leadership courses to earn the Christian Leadership Certificate.

Ministry Panel Nights

The Regional Church Collaborative Team hosted Ministry Panel Nights on the 4th Monday evening of the month. We have a pastor moderate the event by asking questions about a pertinent ministry topic to three select panelists chosen for their expertise, ministry experience, and leadership. Over the year, panelists came from 15 other churches and four parachurch, non-profits, social service, or mental health organizations. As the attendance increased each month, the representation from various local churches also expanded. Both panelists and attendees have greatly appreciated the amount and transparency of discussion!

Leadership One Day

This event covers various leadership and organizational topics from regional experts. It is designed to help equip those who follow Christ for their interactions in the community as they coach kids' sports teams, serve on the PTA, raise their children, and lead in the workplace or ministry. We held four Leadership One Day events focusing on topics of Leadership and Discipleship. We started with a keynote speaker for the Spring dates and then followed with breakout sessions. We experienced steady attendance and enjoyed hearing speakers from churches, including our own, and ten different community organizations.

We were not able to start the Wheaton program this year. Yet, we are continuing the recruiting process to launch the MA in Ministry Leadership cohort in another year.

The Global Leadership Summit was hosted at Grace Harborcreek this year. The philosophy for the change was to better serve people in a 2-day learning environment with table and chair seating arrangements. The proximity to local restaurants in that location provided quick access to lunch venues and provided an opportunity for Grace to support and continue to build relationships with businesses in the Harborcreek area.

Other churches, non-profit organizations, and businesses are increasingly using the GLI building for training and leadership purposes. These include Women's Care Center, Erie Live Workshop, Christ Temple, Sarah Reed Children's Center, Quick Care Homes, and National Fuel. Having others use our facility helps build awareness as different people experience the building, are exposed to our rolling program and course ads on the screens, and can pick up GLI literature.

Finally, we are exploring ways to offer our programs more affordably and build a base of resources to provide more scholarships. We'd love to create an educational fund so course costs don't have to be a barrier for those eager to take the next step in their ministry or leadership journey. That is one of my big prayer requests for this next year. Let's see what God has in store!



GRACE HARBORCREEK

Pastor Michael Crisman, Grace Harborcreek Site Pastor



Sometimes, through hindsight, God gives us a gift when He allows us to look back and see His work and the role He's graciously allowed us to play in it. I hope this update is a gift for everyone reading because it sure is for me!

Some of the notable events at our site this past year included hosting the annual Community Thanksgiving Service, which is jointly orchestrated by us and other churches in the area. The Old Worship Center renovation was completed, giving the GraceKids ministry a much-needed upgrade and adding classroom and office space. Finally, the annual Easter Pancake Breakfast and Egg Hunt was a success, and we hosted the Global Leadership Summit at Grace Harborcreek for the first time.

But more exciting than what happened INSIDE our walls is what we accomplished OUTSIDE our walls. Throughout the year, pockets of us had the opportunity to visit the Brevillier Assisted Living Facility's weekly church services. We were also able to connect and pray for all manner of students in our area. Some of us visited Penn State Behrend's weekly Cru gatherings, participated in the Harborcreek and Iroquois High Schools' Baccalaureate Ceremonies for graduating seniors, and joined prayer walks before the start of the school year for each of the four major school districts represented at Grace Harborcreek.

This is a pivotal time in Grace Church's history as we look towards what God has in store for us in the next season. God has called us together for a specific purpose: to present God's story to those in our community so that they see themselves in it. I can't wait to see what we will accomplish together in Ministry Year 2024 for God's glory!



GRACE MCKEAN

Pastor Scott Michel – Grace McKean Site Pastor



"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58). I cannot think of a better passage of scripture that captures what we saw unfold at Grace McKean this past year. In September 2022, we found ourselves without staff leads for our Life Group and Worship Ministries. By December, we added the vacant position of a youth lead to the mix. (I just chuckled out loud and shed a tear at the same moment while writing that). One, because we said goodbye to some amazing people, and two, because of how our volunteers in each of those ministries responded. The volunteer leaders in those areas could have easily walked away, using each departure as an opportunity to step down and take a break. Instead, they remained steadfast. They not only stayed, but they took on more, embodying the scripture above. Nate Burtt, Amy Monacella, Alina Zarova, Brent Aller, Michele Krugh, Doris Conley, Kevin Stenson, and the other volunteers who stepped up and linked arms, thank you for being immovable.

Grace McKean - We stand immovable because our God is steadfast. He has demonstrated this through the countless volunteers who stood in the gap while we waited for God to provide. In doing so, we saw our youth numbers swell to new heights, and a youth-led leadership team formed this past spring. We have seen over 60 people this past August looking to connect to a life group, and ten new leaders step forward in faithful obedience. God has also been bringing gifted musicians and vocalists forward in the past six months, ready and willing to use their gifts for the glory of God. To each of you who have stepped up, who have sacrificed and toiled in the work of the Lord....THANK YOU!!! Your toil has not been in vain. Much like Paul thanked God for the steadfastness he heard of in the embattled Thessalonians – an endurance, he said, that stemmed from their "hope in our Lord Jesus Christ," I thank God for all of you. This brings me to my final thought... to all of you who call Grace McKean home; I want to remind you that God is writing one heck of a story here. He has called you here to Grace McKean for a reason: to abound in His work. I pray that we all see the part that we have to play in the story He is writing. Keep being awesome for Jesus!!!

NOTES
