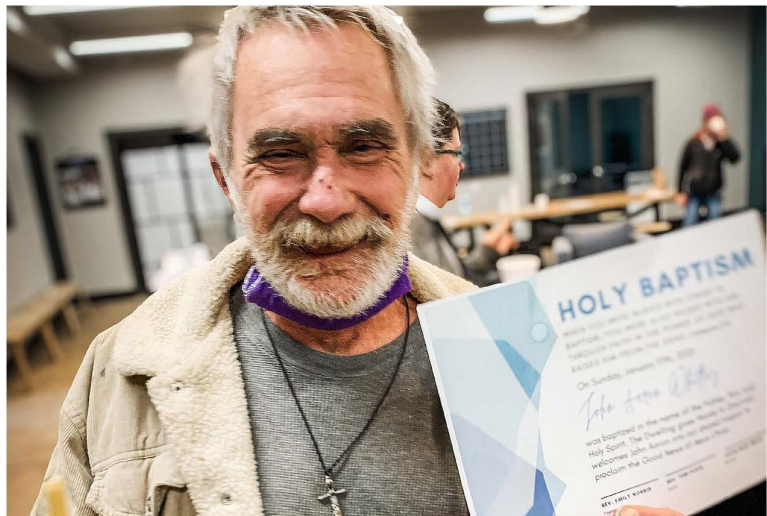


ANNUAL REPORT

2021



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



A MESSAGE FROM ELCA PRESIDING BISHOP

*Elizabeth
Eaton*

Dear friends in Christ,

The last year has been one of adapting and learning. In many places we have seen vibrant and vital ministry spring forth from changes made due to the pandemic. Digital worship opportunities have introduced to our congregations people who may never have walked into one of our buildings. Many congregations have found new ways to invite people to share their generosity through online giving. And many ministries have found just how vital they are as they continue to serve alongside people in their communities.

The first chapter of James, verse 17, reminds us that “Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” Yes, this has been a season of change, but Scripture also reminds us that we serve a generous, steadfast God.

While we stay rooted in God’s enduring, unchanging promise, God also gives us the gifts of creativity and learning. Across all three expressions of the church we have used those gifts to serve God, love our neighbor and share the good news of Jesus Christ. In this time of change, we have opened our arms wider to meet people where they are, living into the reality that we are not defined or confined by the four walls of our buildings.

Through all this, I am so grateful for your generous sharing of creativity, time, talents and resources. All good gifts do come from God, and we are called to share and use those gifts. We have and will continue to answer that call. There is still much change and learning to come, but God’s steadfast love energizes us for the work God is still doing in the world through this church.

Elizabeth A. Eaton

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

“Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”

Grace happens

2021 Annual Report of Grace Lutheran Church

521 Providence Road
Chesapeake, VA 23325
757-420-4704

www.GraceLutheranChesapeake.org

***We are a community
of believers in Christ
called to be servants to all people.***

Table of Contents

Welcome Letter	3
2021 Highlights & Pictures	4-13
Financial Report	14
Preschool Report	15

Dear Members and Friends of Grace:

As I was looking through the pages of our Annual Report, I am in awe of the gracious gifts that the Holy Spirit has bestowed upon us. We in turn have touched many lives throughout the community. This is a great blessing to share with everyone.

The past year was a year for first times at Grace. We were able to simulcast a wedding for everyone to attend, even those that we not able to travel via Zoom. What a beautiful gift to be able to give.

It is truly a blessing for the set up that we have in the Sanctuary. It is wonderful to see everyone on Zoom and in the Sanctuary for Sunday Worship Service.

The best blessing of all is how the Holy Spirit worked through us to keep us strong and connected throughout the year. Grace's light has shown brightly for all to see and next year it will shine brighter for all to join.

With the help of the Holy Spirit, help us to make next year a year of more firsts!

May the peace of Christ be with you always.

La Quita Opperman
2021 Council President

2021 Congregational Council



La Quita Opperman
President



Bob Masters
Vice President



Mike Olson
Secretary



Casey Calkins
Treasurer



Walt Anderson



Alex Cloud



David Cooper



Faith Longworth



Fred Schleeede

Membership

Membership
(as of 12/31/2021)

Baptized	193
Confirmed	161
Voting Members	128



**4 New Members
Welcomed**



**3 Members
Died**



Pastor Leslie helped a Girl Scout earn her "My Promise, My Faith" pin.

**3 Children
Baptized**



Pastor Leslie's Report

Virginia Synod & Tidewater Conference Events

- * Monthly VA Synod Rostered Ministers Worship & Check-in
- * Racial Justice Boundaries & Inclusion Training
- * Served on VA Synod Council
 - * Monthly Tidewater Conference Meetings

Pastoral Care

- * Lots of calls, texts, emails, cards, and letters.
- * Resumed in-person Communion Visits in March.



1 House Blessing

2 Funerals



1 Wedding Officiated

Continuing Education

- * "Focused on Centering Prayer" Webinar
- * "Ignite the Church" Webinars
- * "Grief and Loss in COVID with Young People" Webinar
- * "Starting a New Chapter" Webinars
- * "Ministering to Grieving People" Webinar
- * "Stepping Up to Supervision" Online Course
- * "Design Thinking" Webinar
- * "Introduction to All Creation Sings" Webinar

Christian Education

Spring 2021 Sunday School

- * Adult Sunday School met each week before online worship.
- * Youth & Kid Sunday School met online after worship, alternating weeks.

Monday Bible Study

We continued to gather on Zoom each week to study the books of Psalms, Proverbs, & Ecclesiastes.

There was no Vacation Bible School in 2021, due to COVID.

Fall 2021 Sunday School

- * Adult & Youth Sunday were on hiatus.
- * Kid Sunday School met in person (with risk mitigation measures) after worship each week.

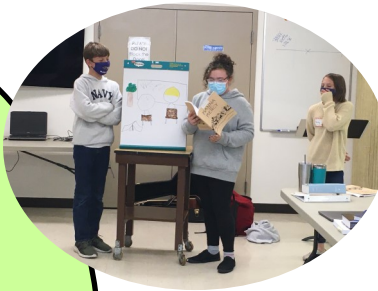
Wednesday Night Bible Study

We continued to gather on Zoom each week to study various topics, including:

- * "By Heart: Conversations with Martin Luther's Small Catechism"
- * Bishop Eaton's 4 Emphases
 - * Leviticus
 - * Ephesians
 - * Nehemiah
 - * James

Confirmation

In October, we began a new Confirmation Cohort in partnership with Emmanuel (VB) and Good Shepherd (VB). There are 5 students from Grace. Students will gather together monthly for two years.



Fellowship

**Fat Tuesday
BYO Breakfast
Zoom Party**

FEBRUARY 16, 2021

6:30pm - Welcome & Prayer
6:45pm - Bingo
7:15pm - Photo Contest voting

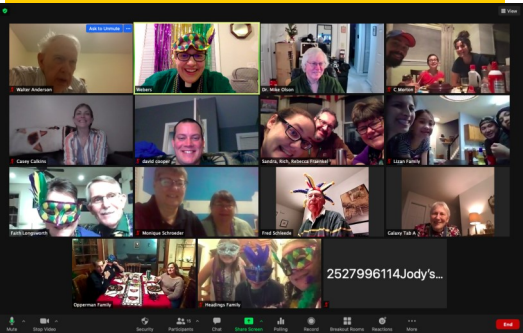
Email [pastorlestie@gracelutheranchesapeake.org] or text (757-598-3522) photos to Pastor Leslie by 7pm. Indicate for each photo which category(s) you want to enter:

- 1) Best Overall Looking Breakfast
- 2) Healthiest Looking Breakfast
- 3) Sweetest Looking Breakfast
- 4) Most Creative Looking Breakfast
- 5) Best Mardi Gras Costume and/or Decor



Pizza & Trivia Night Zoom Event in April

Cinco de Mayo Zoom Event



St. Patrick's Day Zoom Event



Bonfire Bashes were held in June, August, & October.



Food Pantry

The Food Pantry distributed
110,129 lbs of food
to **2,905 individuals**.

The need for food is great,
and we are **averaging 21**
families receiving food each
week.

The food we distribute is
made possible by the
generous donations of
money and food from our
congregation, area
churches and organizations.
In addition, we receive
United States Department of
Agriculture food from the
Food Bank of Southeastern
Virginia and Eastern Shore.

The Food Pantry distributed
tooth brushes, tooth paste,
bars of soap, and wash
clothes to clients to promote
good hygiene with the help
of **two \$250 Thrivent Action**
Team Grant.

35 Christmas Baskets were
distributed to families in need
in the community with the
help of **a \$250 Thrivent Action**
Team Grant.

We have a dedicated group
of **10 volunteers on Mondays**
for distribution and **8**
volunteers on Fridays to pick
up food.

Without these volunteers
each week, we would be
closed and the hungry
people in our community
would not receive the food.

The Food Pantry received
two **\$250 Thrivent Action**
Team Grant to purchase
food that was not available
through the Foodbank.

Beginning Balance: \$11,907.96
Amount of Donations: \$7,009.22
Expenses: \$5271.65
Ending Balance: \$13,645.53

Outreach

We stopped collecting aluminum can tabs, but only after we donated **\$40 to Ronald McDonald House Charities.**

A **\$250 Thrivent Action Team Grant** was used to buy **12 turkeys** for the **Indian River Middle Schools Thanksgiving Baskets.**

The Threaders resumed meeting weekly to make walker bags.

The Book Ministry resumed distributing books each week to Food Pantry clients.

Multiplying Mission



Over 50 toys were collected and donated to **Toys for Tots.**

Mission Support
(offerings passed on to VA Synod and ELCA)

\$18,086
(~10% of our income)



We packed Blessing Bags on **God's Work. Our Hands. Sunday.**



Thank You for Supporting the Shared Mission of the Virginia Synod!

As a Synod in 2021, we have:

- supported on another through this phase of the pandemic.
- assisted congregations in the call process and in times of transition.
- engaged in conversations about racism, equity, and diversity.
- provided educational opportunities for rostered ministers and lay leaders.
- joined together for the Virginia Synod's first digital Assembly.
- helped launch new digital ministries and an exploration for a new ministry on the Eastern Shore.
- significantly increased our proclamation of the good news about Jesus on social ministry platforms.
- shared 40% of mission support with the ELCA Churchwide organization.
- continued to partner with Lutheran and Ecumenical institutions and agencies.
- provided scholarships to seminary students and nurtured new candidates for ministry.

Thank you for being a part of the journey of the Virginia Synod.

Thank you for sharing stories of your ministry to inspire the broader community.

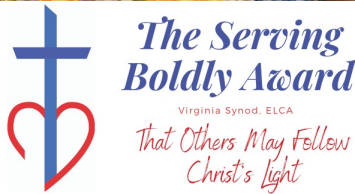
Thank you for being a faithful witness to God's love in your community.

Thank you for sharing the gift of mission support with the Virginia Synod and the wider church.

Peace and hope,
Pastor John Wertz, Jr.
Assistant to the Bishop
Director of Evangelical Mission
Virginia Synod, ELCA

Building Use Groups

- * Alcoholics Anonymous
- * American Sewing Guild
- * Good Mourning Support Group
- * Infant & Toddler Specialist's Network



The Serving Boldly Award, created by the Virginia Synod (ELCA) Council in October 2020, is given to lay leaders who embody and demonstrate a commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ in their congregation and/or community. The first four recipients of the award were: Sandra Hagman (Luther Memorial, Blacksburg), **Elizabeth Keefer (Grace, Chesapeake)**, Garrett Lautenschlager (College, Salem), and Paul Quel (Christ, Richmond).

www.vasynod.org/serving-boldly-award/

Property



Major Projects of 2021

- * A \$250 Thrivent Action Team Grant was used to purchase LED bulbs for the lights in the Education Wing and Pastor's Office.
 - * The Nursery was repainted by the Men's Group.
- * All 3 Preschool classrooms were painted (*This project was paid for by the Preschool*).
- * The Youth Room was relocated and remodeled.

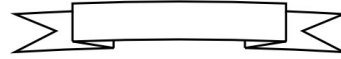
Men's group met monthly for a potluck breakfast and work around the church.

Stewardship

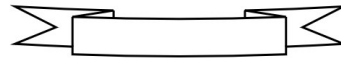
Produced and distributed the “**Alternative Gift Giving Guide**” in the Fall.

Members were encouraged to honor those close to them with a charitable donation made on their behalf to Grace Lutheran Church or other local, national or international organizations that are doing God's work.

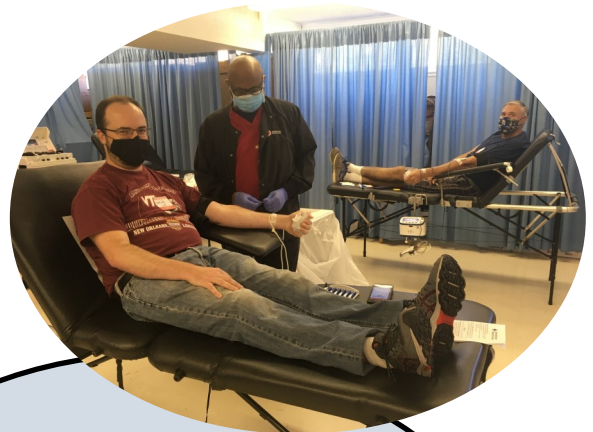
Grace Lutheran Church presents



2021 ALTERNATIVE GIVING GUIDE



All that we have is a gift from God, and all of it can be used to do God's work in the world
...our time, talents, treasures...
AND CHRISTMAS SHOPPING!



Hosted **2 American Red Cross blood drives.**

On May 1, **16 units of blood** were collected, which is a potential of 48 lives saved. *(This lower than usual collection was due to technical issues with the ARC necessitating the cancelling of multiple potential donors.)*

On Oct 31, **23 units of blood** were collected, which is a potential of 69 lives saved.

A Thrivent Action Team was used to buy an outdoor banner than can be used each time we host a Blood Drive in the future!



Worship & Music

**Average Sunday
Worship Attendance
(Jan 3-June 13)**

On Zoom: 59

Guest Preachers

The Rev. Marissa Harris Krey
The Rev. Dr. John T. Myers
The Rev. Debra Thompson
The Rev. James Cobb
The Rev. Curtis Black

**Average Hybrid
Worship Attendance
(June 20-Dec)**

**On Zoom: 33
In-person: 30**



New A/V
equipment
allowed us to
provide hybrid
worship!



**Bell Choir, Praise Team,
and other special music
was put on hold due to
COVID-19.**

Pastor Leslie
hosted a **Blue
Christmas**
worship service
online for the
VA Synod.

Christmas Eve Worship

Family Worship Service @ 5pm
On Zoom: 26

Candlelight Worship Service @ 7pm
On Zoom: 26
In-person: 49



Many hands
made light work
for the Hanging
& Unhanging of
the Greens.





Ash Wednesday


Ashes to Go:
28 in the afternoon
17 in the evening

Worship was prerecorded.

Maundy Thursday

8 for Drive-up Blessing

33 for Evening Worship online



February 17, 2021
Worship
A prerecorded worship service will be available on YouTube throughout the day.

Ashes To Go
12:30-1pm & 7-8pm
Drive up to the portico, roll down and your window, and receive an ashen cross.
All passengers in car (aged 5 and older) MUST be wearing a mask.

Grace Lutheran Church
521 Providence Rd, Chesapeake, VA 23325
www.GraceLutheranChesapeake.org
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7h3d6d517p0dATy0b10g>

Grace happens



Triduum Together

Pastor Leslie hosted worship online each night for the VA Synod.



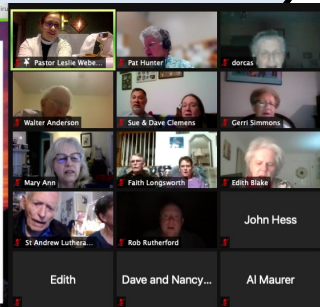
Good Friday

5 for Adoration of the Cross

25 for Evening Worship online

But the pains which he endured, Alleluia!
our salvation have procured; Alleluia!
now above the sky he's king, Alleluia!
where the angels ever sing, Alleluia!

Sing we to our God above, Alleluia!
praise eternal as his love; Alleluia!
praise him, all you heav'nly host, Alleluia!
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia!



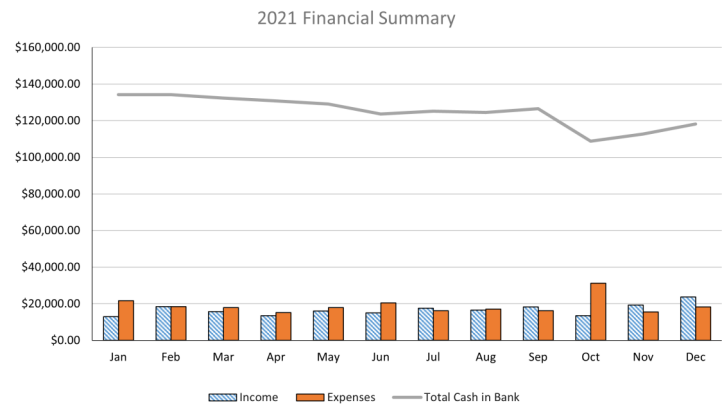
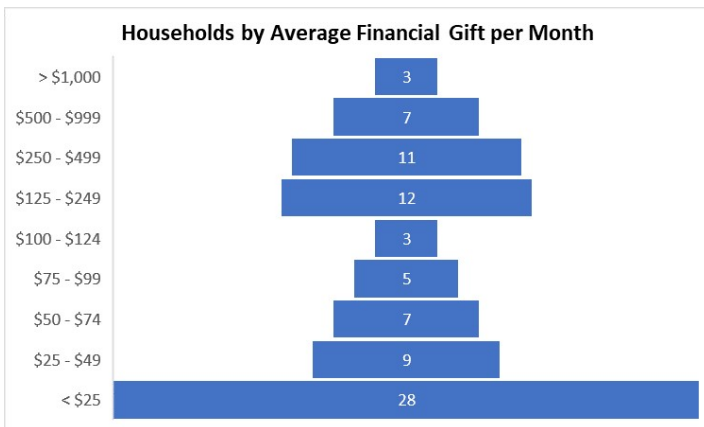
Financial Report

Total giving for 2021, including all contributions, was \$201,558. Total gifts were roughly \$22,500 less than our expectations for the year, and \$22,100 less than total giving in 2020. Details are provided in the table below.

	2020 Actual Giving	2021 Estimated Giving	2021 Actual Giving
General Fund	\$208,931	\$210,000	\$185,011
Food Pantry	\$9,859	\$10,900	\$5,346
Growing in Grace	\$4,892	\$3,200	\$10,801
Endowment	\$0	\$0	\$400
Total	\$223,682	\$224,100	\$201,558

Of note, giving has been evenly split between electronic giving (via tithe.ly) and “physical” gifts (in the offering plate or via the mail).

For 2021, there were 85 contributing households. The distribution, by the size of the monthly financial contribution, is provided below.



NOTE: The deposit for Inclusive Bathroom Project (~\$14,000) was paid from the Growing in Grace (Building) Fund in October 2021.

Restricted Fund Balances
 This money is included in the “total cash in bank” numbers in the graph above

Hubert Memorial: \$10,718
 Growing in Grace: \$26,151
 Memorial Fund: \$371
 Sabbatical Fund: \$6,000

Endowment Fund

Beginning Balance: \$139,540.20
 Ending Balance: \$146,981.40

Mortgage

Beginning Balance: ~\$31,500
 Ending Balance: ~\$12,500



Grace Preschool

Unlike in 2020, the Preschool was able to stay open throughout the Spring of 2021.



The Trike-a-thon raised \$538.44 to benefit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

In an outdoor ceremony, we sent eight 4-year-olds off to Kindergarten!



Over the summer, all three classrooms were painted and the floors were waxed.

Kristie Fields was hired as the new Preschool Director after Roberta Roth resigned over the summer.

Students collected over **500 items** for the **Food Pantry** around Thanksgiving, and many toys for **Toys for Tots** in December.

We welcomed new staff members and many new families to the Grace Preschool family!



Pastor Leslie led **weekly Chapel** to help the students learn about God's love.

The **Christmas Program** was livestreamed. Parents were able to watch on a big screen in the parking lot while drinking hot chocolate.

Change and the need for creativity have become constants over the last year and a half in many aspects of life, including the church. This was the case for **Living Christ Lutheran Church** in Flagstaff, Ariz., even before a global pandemic caused many of us to rethink what it means to be church. Generosity from all three expressions of the ELCA (the churchwide organization, the Grand Canyon Synod and members of Living Christ) helped turn a congregation “on the road out of town, near the mall” into an online presence reaching over 500 people a week from Phoenix to the Philippines. (Read more about Living Christ in the current issue of “**Stories of Faith in Action**” at [ELCA.org/SOFIA](https://www.elca.org/SOFIA).)

Many other congregations have found new ways to connect both when in-person worship was impossible and when congregations began to return to their sanctuaries. Generosity, especially through Mission Support, helped us find and support these new ways of being connected. Early in the pandemic, ELCA Worship launched the “Worship in the Home” webpage, with Scripture, hymn links, prayers and reflections for each

Sunday. These resources were and continue to be used in congregations across the ELCA—even at **Sitka Lutheran Church** in Alaska, whose members printed and hand-delivered “Worship in the Home” resources to fellow members without internet access.

Change and creativity have taught us many things. As Pastor Sandra Rudd of Sitka Lutheran Church noted, “The pandemic was a stark illustration of the fact that the church is not a building. A lot of people say that, but we didn’t fully know it until we didn’t have a building to use. We learned that there are many ways to be connected as the church.” Throughout the pandemic, the ELCA has changed and adapted, doing ministry in new and creative ways, because of the generosity of its members. Even now, you may be gathering in a new way for your annual meeting, to discern how you will steward the gifts shared generously with your congregation to do ministry in your community and beyond. As you have these important conversations, remember that your gifts of time, talent and resources have helped create new spaces beyond our walls and buildings where we continue to worship, serve and love God and each other.

ANNUAL REPORT

2021