



STEWARDSHIP 2024  
Gratitude &  
Grace



"As God's grace reaches  
more and more people,  
there will be deep gratitude,  
and God will receive  
more and more glory."

2 CORINTHIANS 4:15

Paul wrote to the early Church, sending them encouragement about the work that God was doing. He saw a clear connection between the grace of God and the outpouring of gratitude. We discover this when we are mindful of recognizing God's abundant grace which surrounds us at all times and in all places, and we choose gratitude as a response to everything God has done and is doing. Gratitude and grace. They are intrinsically bound. The word "gratitude" comes from the Latin *gratus*, meaning thankful or pleasing. That same root word is found in the word "grace" meaning given by God. Spiritual teacher Henri Nouwen wrote of this deep connection between gratitude and grace, saying, "I am gradually learning that the call to gratitude asks us to say, 'Everything is grace.'" That is, everything is a gift from God.

Every year at this time, we name and celebrate what God has done and is doing at Grace Church. With grateful hearts, we share with you where we have seen God at work, hoping you will tell us where you have seen God at work. To paraphrase Paul, **God's grace spreads, we have gratitude, God gets more glory!**

- God's grace was so generously revealed in our past. We are always thankful for this, and this year we watched as Ginny Karl's gracious gift—given before her death—was used to enhance and create our beautiful and holy Memorial Garden, reminding us in a new way of the grace of the many people who have gone before us whose love has shaped us. Our beautiful building established by faithful people in ages past continually bears witness to the goodness we have inherited. **God's grace, our gratitude, God's glory!**
- God's grace is active and growing in the newest generation of the followers of Jesus! Our Children's Ministries are fruitful and exciting, and we are honored to invest in the formation and care of our youngest members. Our Sunday School flourishes under the care of Miss Kathryn McManus, with new families bringing their gifts and passions and children to be part of us. Vacation Bible School was a blast! Our Christmas Pageant had a large and talented cast, and our Easter Egg hunt was holy mayhem. Tween Nights and Youth Events fill the calendar, and it's not at all unusual to hear the sound of joyful laughter echoing in our halls. **God's grace, our gratitude, God's glory!**



- God's grace is faithfully preached, taught, sung about, and celebrated. Worship is at the center of our life together, and we are so blessed by our choirs, whose gifts are gloriously rendered under the direction of Dr. Anne Matlack. Worship leaders, acolytes, ushers, lectors, the altar and flower guild: all of these people share in leading worship, working side by side with our priests, to ensure that all of God's people are fed by God's Word and the Bread of Heaven. **God's grace, our gratitude, God's glory!**



- God's grace spreads beyond our buildings. Our Live-Stream continues to grow in reach and impact. Weekly we hear from people near and far who pray with us and grow in faith alongside of us, even though separated by miles. What was once a pandemic-era necessity, has become a tool through which God is very much at work, connecting us with new disciples in other places. **God's grace, our gratitude, God's glory!**
- God's grace is freely shared. What a blessing it is to share with our neighbors! Fresh food is given to the food pantry around the corner at First Baptist to share with those who are hungry, underwear is given to inmates in need of dignity, diapers are sent to mothers and babies who struggle, and money for school supplies was sent all the way to Liberia! Many hands work together throughout the year, deploying resources as needed to make sure that the blessings we receive are always on the move. **God's grace, our gratitude, God's glory!**
- God's grace is revealed through you! Our members are embodied grace. Your prayers lift us up. Your generosity allows us to reach for God and for our neighbors. Your gifts put our hopes and plans into action. Your faithfulness shows us a glimpse of God's action among us. **God's grace, our gratitude, God's glory!**

You are part of our story, and we long to be part of yours. As you consider the ways God is calling you to a life of generosity and gratitude, know that we are honored to be joined with you in this God-given cycle of grace, gratitude and glory.

In the spirit of the gratitude that we feel for all of you who join in our Grace community in prayer, we would like to ask that you make a financial pledge to support our ongoing ministries, and behind the scenes church expenses. Your pledge is a tangible way you can show your support for Grace as we plan our finances for the coming year. Our gratitude for the time, treasure and talent so many of our parishioners give to Grace is steadfast.

Please join us on Sunday, November 19 for the 10AM service and for a special Coffee Hour immediately following, when we will celebrate the fullness of grace God has given us this year, and toast our life together!

We are honored to partner with you as we continue to fill our lives with Grace.

*Joyfully yours,*

*The Rector, Wardens, Vestry & Stewardship Team*



# Pledging FAQs

## Q Does all the money go to Jesus? Really?

A Yes! We promise! We take seriously the fact that we are Christ's Body here in Madison. And Jesus promised that when we serve the vulnerable and care for one another we are actually caring for Jesus. Everything we do, we do for God's glory and to serve God's people. Every time the choir sings, or the Sunday School students learn a new Bible story, or our priests visit the hospital, or buy silver polish for the communion vessels, we know that we are serving the Living God who is among us. So, we really do promise, every cent you give is for Jesus!

## Q When do you need my pledge card back? Does it need to come in the mail?

A You can pledge online, email your pledge amount, or return your pledge card to the office. The sooner we get your pledge commitment, the sooner we can plan our budget for the coming year.

## Q So, if I send in my pledge, do you need the payment today?

A Nope! The card helps us know what you plan to give for the coming year, so we can plan our ministry for the coming year. People fulfill their pledges on whatever timetable works for their own budget and finances. You can pay today, if that makes your life easier, but we aren't looking for money today, just your intentions for giving.

## Q This is such a wealthy area. Do you really need help from all members?

A We surely do! This is indeed an affluent part of the country. Some of us are very comfortable. Some of us barely get by. And most of us are somewhere in between. Our goal is a pledge from every member, in part because we who do pledge have come to know great joy in giving our resources to support this parish. **Our Wardens and Vestry leadership participates 100% and have increased their pledge an overall of 7.4%.** It's a wonderful feeling to see our money support God's creative work! Each gift is dear to us, because it represents the faithfulness of a member who shares our belief that we are called to be generous and invited to share. Simply put, we need every pledge to continue to do the work God has given us to do.

## Q I like to give money in the offering plate—instead of pledging. Isn't that the same thing?

A First of all, thank you! For every time you put any amount of money in the offering plate, you have our sincere thanks! Offering plate donations make up a small portion of our annual budget, and we are grateful for that. Giving us an idea of your giving plans for the coming year through filling out a pledge card helps us plan wisely. The Vestry will meet in the coming months to determine what our expenses and resources will be for the next year. The pledge cards represent the plans that our members have for helping us in the coming year. We can provide weekly envelopes if you would like, so you can put your offering in the plate every week. If you would like offering envelopes, just check that box on your card, and we will get them to you!

## Q Can I pay electronically?

A Absolutely! Our website offers the ability to make pledges and payments on a secure platform. Visit [www.gracemadison.org/giving](http://www.gracemadison.org/giving).





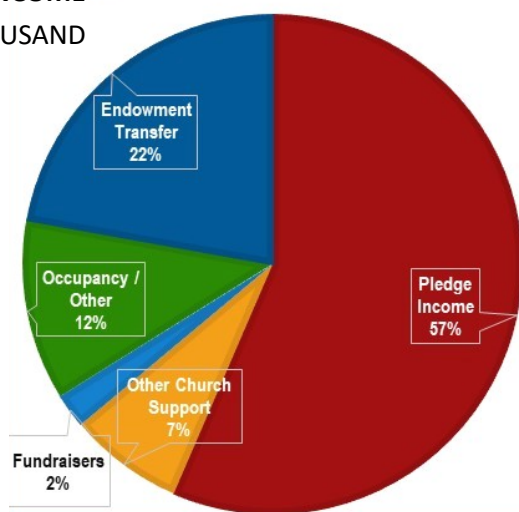
# financial snapshot

## Q What's the outlook for our finances in 2024?

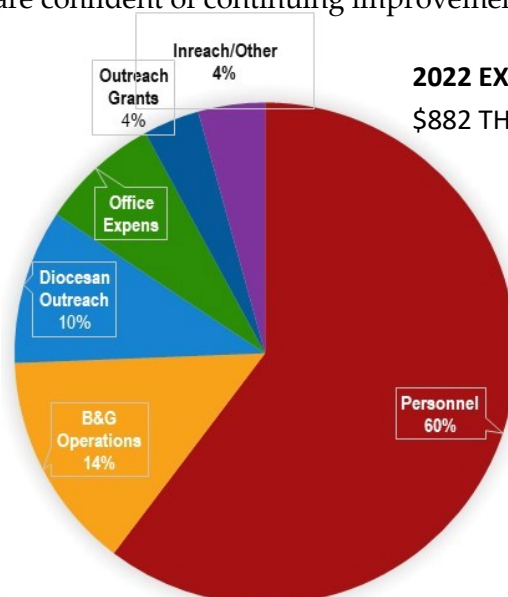
A 2023 has been a year of progress in our efforts to return our financial performance to something more in line with what we want and expect for Grace Church. When we prepared our budget for the year back in the spring, we forecast that our operating budget would show a deficit of just over \$60 thousand, caused in part by expectations of higher inflation. Six months later, our latest estimate shows a deficit in the low \$40 thousands, which is a substantial improvement versus the deficit forecast in the spring. This is better, but not yet the outcome we want. And importantly for the future, much of this improvement is due to higher than anticipated contributions from the parish, most of it through pledges.

Looking ahead to 2024, inflation in supplies including fuel and services has not gone away. But as in all years our prospects for continued improvement in our financial situation will depend on the contributions of parishioners, again, especially through pledges and the continued efforts of the Clergy, Wardens, Vestry and Staff to make sure that funds with which we are entrusted, are employed to maximum effect in furthering our objectives as an Episcopal Community. With your support we are confident of continuing improvement.

**2022 INCOME**  
\$848 THOUSAND



**2022 EXPENSES**  
\$882 THOUSAND



## Q Doesn't the church get funding from outside sources, like the Diocese or charitable foundations? What about our endowment?

A The ministry of our parish is funded almost entirely by our members. Without the generosity of the people who support us, we could not have public worship, provide pastoral care, support outreach initiatives or care for our buildings. We give a portion of our money to the Diocese, to support the work of the Bishop and to assist mission parishes throughout the Diocese in much poorer areas whose ministries feed the hungry and proclaim the Good News of Jesus. Your pledge money supports both the Grace community and other communities which need help. We are indeed blessed with an endowment, which is mainly the result of major gifts from parishioners over the past thirty years. Even with this endowment, we are very disciplined about living within our means and not drawing on the endowment beyond specified limits that are designed to preserve these funds for future parish needs. We live simply, share what we have and give thanks every day for the people who love us and continue to give to us so generously.



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