



A Word from Our Leaders

Who could have ever known what our world would endure during these past couple of years? At every turn, it seemed we couldn't escape another crisis, a recurring controversy, or a heartbreaking tragedy. And in a time when we needed each other the most, this pandemic disrupted our sense of community and oftentimes kept us from coming together to mend our hearts and bring comfort to each other.

But although these past two years have been incredibly difficult, they have reminded us that God is our Great Comforter, and is fully capable of giving us true peace and understanding when there seem to be no answers. Romans 8:28 says, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Our friends in faith, it's time for God's glory to be revealed in US!

This month, we will launch the "Grace Upon Grace" campaign. This campaign will be unlike any others that have come before it. With this campaign, we will go far beyond the walls of Grace Avenue to claim the promises of God for our future ministry! For those of us who may be grieving what used to be, remember the words of Isaiah 43:19, "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." We believe that God is now calling us to join together into a bold new future – a future where we can create a home to all those in our community searching for comfort, inspiration, and compassion.

So, what do we do now? We PRAY! Let us ask, "God, what do You want to do through us? How can we follow Your call? How can we turn our buildings from just places we gather to a launching pad for community outreach? How can we bear witness to Your love, and extend Your grace to our community?"

Together we will use our Imagination and Investment to Impact our Ministry in fulfilling God's promise of "Grace Upon Grace" – John 1:16.

Blessings,

Kenneth & Suzanne Wolverton
Campaign Co-Chairs

Chris & Megan Belknap
Campaign Co-Chairs



A new era is beginning at Grace Avenue United Methodist Church. Our new strategic plan is launching us into new possibilities and opportunities as we live into our mission of eradicating homelessness in whatever form it presents itself. This exciting new day springs forth, as it always has at our church, from God's grace. Grace Avenue has been born and reborn several times throughout the years by grace layered on more grace. God's grace is not static. It is dynamic and is lavished upon us even in the most difficult of circumstances. Emerging from the last two years of the global pandemic, we now endeavor to take hold of this opportunity in a bold way. It is possible if we follow the pattern of God's grace.

It begins with imagination. Genesis 1:27 reminds us that we are the products of God's imagination. We have been created in God's image and are invited to imagine what the world could be when it is transformed by God's Love. As the church we are called to dream, innovate, and create.

God's grace then involves investment. Nothing demonstrates this more fully than God's gift of Godself in Jesus Christ. By entering into the human condition and through Christ's ultimate sacrifice on the cross, God's investment in us is undeniable and complete (Philippians 2:5-11). As Christians we are given the chance to invest our lives and resources as a reflection of what God has done for us.

Finally, we know God's grace has an impact. From small seeds of blessing to changed lives in full bloom, we can all testify to the impact God's grace has had upon us. We believe God's grace is so powerful that it can have an impact on institutions and individuals and on systems that contribute to spiritual, emotional, and physical homelessness. As a church we have the capacity to welcome home all people to God's grace.

This is the pattern we will follow in the Grace Upon Grace campaign: Imagination, Investment, Impact. I hope you are as excited as I am to begin this journey. I request that you carefully read and reflect on this Campaign Guide. I ask that you begin praying for what God wants of us in this campaign. I encourage you to reflect on your own Grace Upon Grace story and the Grace upon Grace stories that will be created in the generations to come.

With you on Grace Avenue,

Billy Echols-Richter
Pastor

