

*Deep
Roots,
Growing
Branches*



annual report

20
25



GRACE CHAPEL






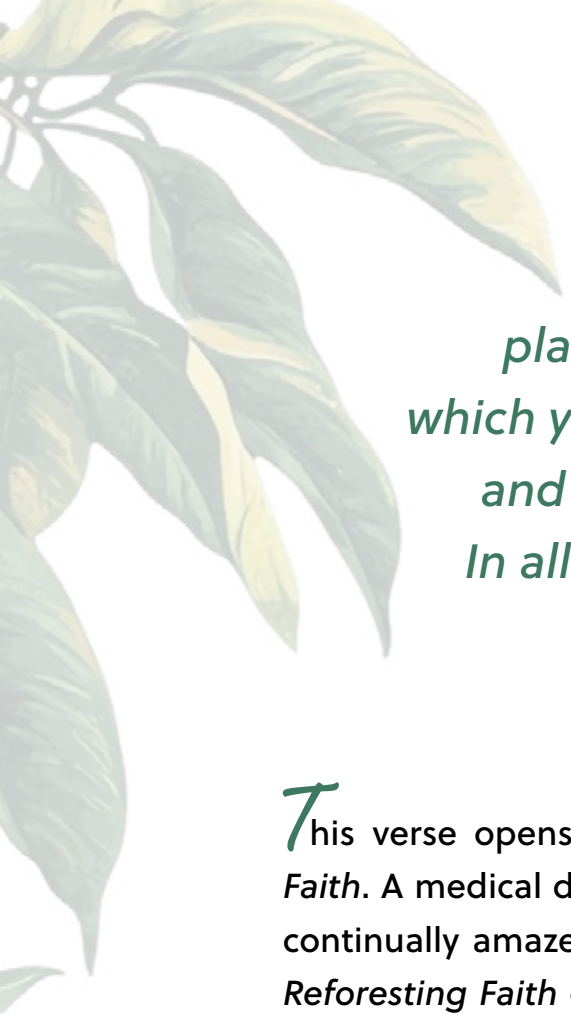
*God has been faithfully
working in and through
Grace Chapel since our
beginning, and in all kinds
of seasons. This year was one
of change, for sure... but God
has been good through it all.*

Yet He has not left Himself without testimony:
He has shown kindness by giving you rain from
heaven and crops in their seasons;
He provides you with plenty of food
and fills your hearts with joy."

Acts 14:7

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*They are like trees
planted by streams of water,
which yield their fruit in their season,
and their leaves do not wither.
In all that they do, they prosper.*


PSALM 1:3 (NRSV)

*T*his verse opens Matthew Sleeth's excellent book, *Reforesting Faith*. A medical doctor who came to faith as an adult, Sleeth was continually amazed at the prominent role trees play in scripture. *Reforesting Faith* contains frequent reminders that God has used the tree - both literally and figuratively - throughout scripture to highlight His goodness, His faithfulness, and His steadfast love for us.

Reading through the book, it's striking to see the parallels between a healthy forest and a thriving church.

That makes this year's Annual Report theme, "Deep Roots, Growing Branches" a wonderful reminder of how good and faithful God has been to Grace Chapel.

Recent scientific advances have uncovered some surprising ways the root systems in a healthy forest are interconnected. We're learning that within a healthy forest, trees are sharing resources



and “communicating” in ways that support other trees that may be suffering, either under the stress of disease or infestation or due to environmental factors.

While we’ve seen how connected and interdependent trees are through their canopies, it’s remarkable how much the underground root systems are intertwined in ways that support and promote growth in the forest.

Sounds a lot like the way the people in a healthy church community support each other, doesn’t it?

Here in New England, every tree endures challenging conditions throughout the year: heat and cold, deluges and droughts, wind and storms... and adds another ring to its trunk.

This year at Grace Chapel has not been without its own seasonal challenges. Yet through them all, our roots continue to go deeper, and our branches continue to grow: reaching wide, and bearing fruit. Which makes this year’s Annual Report theme all the more relevant as we celebrate what God has done, and look ahead to what God will do – both through our deep roots, and our growing branches.

From Grace Chapel's Board of Elders

Dear Grace Chapel,

It is with gratitude, joy, and a sense of expectancy that I and the Board of Elders begin this letter to you, and we do so with eyes wide open to the challenges before us.

This has been a challenging year. What began as a sense of fulfillment and expectancy in June 2024 as Pastor Bryan Wilkerson preached his last sermon as Grace Chapel's Senior Pastor and passed the baton to Pastor Joshua Clough, became a sense of uncertainty when on March 17, 2025, it was announced that Pastor Joshua would be stepping down as Senior Pastor.

This was not what any of us expected. However, as Pastor Tim Ghali so eloquently and wisely reminded us, God's vision for Grace Chapel hasn't changed, even when our pursuit of it takes a detour. God works in all things for the good of those who love Him (Rom 8:28).

The roots of Grace Chapel grow deep, and the branches of our ministry reach wide.

What happened next has been wonderful. We were humbled in so many ways by how so many in Grace Chapel reacted, how you have reacted – our congregation, our staff, our leaders – with deep humility, kindness, love, and expectation. We were touched by the number of people who shared their thoughts and concerns about Joshua's resignation, so many who ended by saying "please let me know how I can help, and know that I am praying for Grace Chapel and the leadership of Grace Chapel."

Every aspect of our church continues to thrive, from central preaching to our campus' local ministries. The body of Grace Chapel has been deeply blessed by the pastors on our teaching team stepping into the pulpit and nourishing our souls by preaching with love, humility, passion, leadership

and conviction - where the Word, where Christ is the focal point. The ministries and all that constitute the body of Christ at Grace Chapel have not only continued faithfully, young people are worshiping and drawing near to their Lord and hungry to know Him, and new ministries are being renewed or coming into being: Prayer, Foster Care, Alcoholics Anonymous, and more. God's Spirit is at work in ways we are only beginning to see.

We must offer deep gratitude to the staff of Grace Chapel this year in particular for their unwavering commitment and service, as they have gone above and beyond to do what is necessary to quickly adapt to this unexpected transition.

Have there been challenges? Absolutely. Have we each been confronted with unexpected and sometimes difficult changes? Yes! Every year and across all of campuses we experience changes.

In addition to the unexpected resignation of our Senior Pastor, the Lexington campus Classic worship service director also resigned. And after attempting to fully reboot our Celebrate Recovery Program post-COVID, it was decided that the season for CR was drawing to a close.

Through it all, has God been faithful? Without question.

The teaching team stepped up to fill the pulpit, and the Lexington choir and orchestra have continued during this interlude with support from other members of our worship team. The Celebrate Recovery community was invited to meet with their small groups under our Group Life ministry and participate in other Care and Support ministries, and CR continues to be hosted at several surrounding churches. At the request of two CR veterans who were willing to lead, we opened our building to Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-anon. These programs are reaching out into the community, and we now include these as Care and Support Ministries of Grace Chapel.

The Grace Chapel Board of Elders is currently made up of ten people: nine volunteer leaders from our congregation, and our Executive Pastor Mark MacDonald who represents the Office of the Senior Pastor. We typically

From Grace Chapel's Board of Elders (cont.)

meet approximately 21 times a year, serve on a variety of committees, develop high level strategies and policies, and make decisions on issues that affect the entire church body. It is a joy to serve with these very committed and capable men and women.

With great love for our community and our staff, the Board of Elders is praying, listening, researching, and working on a comprehensive strategic plan for Grace Chapel, which will include following God's ministry vision for outreach and engagement, long term financial sustainability and a new search committee to find our new Senior Pastor. In light of Pastor Joshua's resignation, we expanded priorities to ensure the vision and mission of Grace Chapel continues uninterrupted and emerges stronger from this unexpected transition period.

We are seeing this timeframe as an opportunity to "deepen our roots and grow our branches" in a number of ways:

- 1. The Board is committed to establishing strong communication practices.** We have worked with the Grace Chapel executive team to implement consistent and transparent communications so that you, as a congregation, are able to engage with us at each step of the process in our search for a new Senior Pastor.
- 2. The Board has entered a period of prayer and seeking God for discernment.** As a Board, we have read the book *Lead with Prayer*, recommended by Pastor Jeanette Yep. God has promised that as we humble ourselves and seek Him, He will hear. His voice will unite us around a common vision for Grace Chapel. We invite you to join us in prayer as we expand opportunities for prayer across each of our campuses.
- 3. In addition to listening to the Lord, we are listening to you.** We want every voice at Grace Chapel to be heard! We will be prayerfully poring over the survey that was part of our Senior Pastor search process, and following up with what we hear. We are reading your emails and discussing what you shared with us.
- 4. We are continuing to prioritize our renewed vision and strategic plan.** This plan includes outreach, engagement, long term financial sustainability for each campus, and a new search committee. As we initiate a search for the Senior Pastor, we are moving to strengthen the church so that when the Lord leads us to our next Senior

Pastor, Grace Chapel will be ready to thrive under new leadership.

5. We are adding some new Board committees which will multiply our efforts and enable us to support the work that has to be done in the coming months. In addition to the five standing committees - Audit, Finance, Governance, Nominating & Executive committees - we have, since February, initiated new committees including Building, Month of Prayer, Strategy, and of course, Search Process. Each of these include a mix of elders, staff and lay people.

We believe that in many ways, in this season of transition, we are all rediscovering Grace Chapel as "our" church whether we are members, regular attenders, staff, or elders. We are rolling up our sleeves to serve together.

The heart of Grace Chapel's mission these 75 years- the reason we exist - will never change. Our mission is to make and mobilize more disciples for Jesus Christ in Greater Boston and beyond. Our vision for the kind of church we strive to be remains front and center: To be a vibrant, growing, multicultural community of seekers and believers, discovering life with God together for the good of greater Boston and the world. It is a vision for people first.

The message we have heard from so many of you is a clear and unwavering commitment to Christ and desire for Grace Chapel to fulfill our role in God's will being done on earth, to know Him and to make Him known. We are committed to doing all that is required to ensure that Grace Chapel's years of greatest impact for the kingdom start now.

On behalf of Grace Chapel's Board of Elders,

Victor Gerdes

Board Chair



growing branches

*growing
branches*



1,545

*Average In-Person
Worship Attendance
(+8% from 2024)*

436

Connection Cards

*P*eople come to Grace Chapel from all over the world and find their way here in countless ways, whether driving by one of our campuses or signs, seeing an online ad or social media post, or through the recommendation or invitation of a current or former attendee.

In a time when fewer and fewer people are actively seeking to connect with churches, we see a steady stream of new people, from young adults to empty nesters, families with school-age kids to older singles. We're blessed by the presence and involvement of new visitors coming to our church and jumping right into community!



From a new affender...

"Grace Chapel quickly became a place where we felt seen and invited into genuine fellowship. Although it took a little time to meet peers in our stage of life, Pastors Dom, Josiah, and Matt were intentional about introducing us to the young adult community. Their guidance helped us join several small group Bible studies, and those gatherings have been a huge blessing. They have given us friendships, accountability, and a shared passion for following Christ, all within a community that feels like family...

Arriving at Grace Chapel felt a bit daunting at first, mostly because it was hard to locate the right small group...

Once we connected, everything changed. From that moment, people welcomed us with warmth and kindness, and it became easy to engage in the life of the church.

Getting involved with the Shine volunteer team was especially meaningful. I felt trusted and valued right away, and serving alongside others helped me feel at home faster than I expected...

Serving children in the Shine ministry has allowed me to share God's love in practical ways, and the weekly small group studies have deepened my understanding of scripture and strengthened my faith.

Through these experiences God has been shaping my heart, teaching me humility, and reminding me of the joy that comes from serving others."



From a new young adult

"I came to Grace Chapel in late-January with the intention of strengthening my relationship with God within a supportive community and finding meaningful ways to serve others, inspired by the example of Jesus.

Over the past year, I've realized that faith is most vibrant when shared and nurtured collectively within a community.

From the moment I walked into Grace Chapel, I felt genuinely welcomed and valued by both staff and community members...

Being new to Grace Chapel has been a deeply enriching experience...

One aspect I greatly appreciate about Grace Chapel is how responsive and supportive the community is. Whenever I expressed a desire to serve or make an impact, I was directed to the right resources and people without hesitation...

As I continue my faith journey, I'm confident that the supportive community at Grace Chapel will remain a cornerstone of encouragement and growth. Being part of this church family is truly a blessing."

DIGITAL + ONLINE

growing our digital reach

24,825
HOURS

WATCHING GRACE CHAPEL CONTENT

THAT'S OVER
1,000 DAYS!

7,371

YouTube Subscribers

669

New Subscribers

148,270

YouTube Video Views

1,510,182

YouTube Impressions

397,000

Website Views

94

Countries Visited Our Website

Over the last two years at Grace Chapel's Online Campus, we've been prayerfully and practically pursuing the answer to the question, "What is ministry in a digital age?" And over this past year, our focus has centered on two of the most essential qualities of digital ministry: it must be *personal* and it must be *engaging*.

Ministry that closes the distance

Though our platform is digital, our mission remains deeply human. Behind every screen, whether it's across the region or on the other side of the world, is a person created in the image of God longing for connection, truth, and belonging.

That's why we've made it a priority to ensure our communication feels personal, not distant. We want to communicate as if we're sitting right beside someone, sharing life and faith together.

This year, one of the ways we brought that vision to life was through the launch of the *Thursday 3 Newsletter*—a mix of church updates and personal reflections. Part E-newsletter, part blog, it features everything from thought-provoking personal takes on the latest AI voice bots to where to find the best hot pot in Boston. And through it all the voice of Grace Chapel comes through.

We also began inviting guest contributors from our Online Campus to share their own stories and insights. One recent highlight was a thoughtful, personal, and entertaining reflection on the newest Mission Impossible movie.

The newsletter and these personal voices help our campus feel less like a digital broadcast and more like a living, breathing community of faith.

Inviting participation, not just viewership

One of our goals for everyone who participates in our Online Campus is to help them move beyond passive viewing and into active discipleship. To help our audience become more actively engaged where they are, we introduced a new segment following each week's service: the "Question of the Week."

This interactive space invites Online Campus members to submit questions throughout the week. Whether it's "How do you choose a Bible translation?" or "What's the process behind creating our sermon bumper videos?", these questions foster curiosity, spiritual growth, and turn Sunday services into an ongoing conversation. It becomes a time where people feel seen, heard, and valued.

This year we've seen the fruit of this digital ministry in profound ways: several families have started gathering in person in upstate New York to watch the service and form a community together.

One member, Cindy Grove, shared how she found faith, baptism, and purpose through the Online Campus—and now leads a Bible study of her own.

Others speak of finding a church home despite life's challenges, travel demands, or physical limitations. Each story is a testimony to God's work through technology, relationships, and His unchanging grace.

"The digital space is where the people are, whether we like it or not. The question becomes, will we enter in (1 Corinthians 9:22)? We have an unprecedented opportunity to infuse discipleship learning into the everyday life of every believer, by saturating their digital consumption with disruptive re-directions to the embodied life of following Jesus. Multitudes stand in the valley of decision. Moment by moment, they are deciding on something. If we are not present in the digital space, pressing people toward inconvenient Christ-like following, they will simply decide on something easier."

What is Ministry in a Digital Age, Dave Benson, Natasha Edwards, Guichun Jun & Eva Nappier



"Grace Chapel's online campus has not only deepened my faith but transformed my life. Through its community and teachings, I became a Christian, was baptized, and found a spiritual home as a member. It inspired me to spread love—handing flowers to those leaving hospitals with a message of hope. It led me to join small Bible studies and, ultimately, to lead my own, sharing the light I once received. This journey is one of faith, love, and purpose, all rooted in the grace I discovered here." **-Cindy Grove**



"Wow, what a blessing in our lives! The Online Campus welcomed us with open arms during the pandemic and continues to bless us with Gospel-centered teaching, love for all people, and grace-filled encouragement through all of life's challenges. Due to our family's busy work and travel schedule, we would otherwise be unable to attend church every Sunday. The Online Campus provides us with our weekly anchor to God's truth, surrounds us with a wonderful church family with whom we love worshipping and studying God's word together, and allows us to access so many top-notch resources that have been a huge blessing not only in our lives but also to our surrounding community. How great is God's goodness to us through the Online Campus at Grace!" -**Dr. Josie McAllister**

"My favorite part of the online campus is the surprising amount of engagement I feel from it... I can't wait to hear your friendly greeting and relatable stories. The question of the week is like coming out of the sanctuary and chatting with folks before heading home... I am so grateful for it!" -**Christy Brochu**



growing our community community



Group Life had a surprisingly strong year in terms of attendance, new groups, and faithful leaders. In addition to our ongoing Life Groups that serve in so many ways (Mixed Groups, Women's, Men's, Young Adults, etc.), we had flourishing Short-Term Groups throughout the year and we give God thanks for the leaders and for the many people who chose to join these offerings.

One of the highlights of the year included the responses to the After-Party Groups that were launched around the Presidential Election season. One attendee said, "This is exactly what I needed right now." Another said, "I needed help in talking to my family members in this polarized atmosphere and I found support in my group."

We look forward to creating more groups that find the intersection between our faith and our society.

1,599

*People Participated in an
Ongoing Life Group*

288

Group Leaders

133

Life Groups

14

Short-Term Groups

333

*Short-Term Group
Participants*

growing our community

baptisms



36

BAPTISMS



"Four years ago, as recommended by one of my close friends, who is a devout Christian, I started reading and searching for answers in the bible. Since then, Jesus has been guiding me to discover my shortcomings and helping me to look at myself, my life, and the choices I made from a completely different perspective. He helped me to recognize and accept my imperfection, taught me to trust and surrender to him, and led me to grow as a person in faith. Today I proudly yet humbly take the next step in my faith journey and publicly declare my faith in Jesus Christ. I know I am still a work in progress, but with God's help, I will continue to grow in Christ." - **Hong Zhang**

"I've transitioned from merely being a believer to becoming a witness. I've seen how God extends chances to all of us, from the staunchest atheists to the most devout believers. That's why I decided to attend Grace Chapel last year; I felt welcomed and could truly be myself. My decision to be baptized is a declaration to everyone who knows me: I am indeed a follower of Christ." -**Arthur Marcharet deSilviera**

growing our community

membership

membership



1,884

Members as of April 30, 2024

61

*New Members May 1, 2024 -
April 30, 2025*

144

*Transferred/Dropped/
Data Cleanup*

11

Deceased

1,790

*Total Membership as of
April 30, 2025*

Becoming a member of Grace Chapel is more than just a public declaration of commitment to the mission and vision of our church. Membership is a deep and meaningful commitment to each other: to caring for one another as we all strive to bring God's love into the neighborhoods and communities we share.

Membership is also practical. Grace Chapel has a long history of congregational governance where members vote to approve key decisions that affect the future of our church. Members approve nominees for church offices and our annual operating budget, as well as strategic decisions like selling our office building and approving our new senior pastor.

growing our community

New members added

- Angela Ausborn
- Michael Ellis
- Randa Karim
- Kimberly Sandquist
- Aster Berihun
- Jennifer Englehart
- Joshua King
- Roshan Satgunam
- Rich By
- Fabio Freire
- Morgan King
- Alexandra Simion
- Sue By
- Bob Fubel
- Mary Leahy
- Abraham Simon
- Betty Byrne
- Elaine Fubel
- Michael Long
- Wendy Simonson
- Andrew Cardarelli
- Brad Gardner
- Samuel Lopez
- Kathy Smith Johnson
- Jason Chou
- Denise Gardner
- Kathleen MacDonald
- Lingzi Tashakkor
- Jeannie Chou
- Matt Giamarco
- Dawn MacKerron
- Douglas Thorpe
- Deborah Crawford
- John Green
- Shirley Maddox
- Simion Viorel
- Kathleen Crowell
- Sue Green
- Jeffrey Miller
- Holly Waite
- Julio Cruz
- Caleb Harty
- Yolanda Miller
- David Welch
- Cindy Cunha
- Elaine Harvey
- Luis Pabon
- Annie Yen
- Jack Cunha
- Julia Li Hua
- Ben Perry
- Marieke Zhao
- Charlene Denny
- Susan Jakobek
- Jessica Perry
- Patricia Didek
- Bob Johnson
- Sherryllene Pinnock
- Krista Ellis
- Fadi Karim
- Ginette Saimprevil

Members gone home to be with the Lord

- John Bishop
- Marilyn DiNapoli
- Peter Dupre
- Gary Gabrielson
- Tina Granata
- Faith Hicks
- Frances Marcano
- Shirley McLaughlin
- Bob Meisenhelder
- Sharon Staples
- Esther Suh



from our Campuses...

"It is obvious that we have a group of folks who the Lord has led to know Him more, who love our community and Grace Chapel and know how God answers as we reach out to Him. I think we are all hungry to see more of this incredible wealth of a richer relationship with Jesus for us and everyone at Grace Chapel."

- Lexington Prayer Night Participant

"Some of us met last Saturday to process the outcome/impacts of the [2024] elections in a community. Some voted Democratic and others Republican. Some have accepted the election outcome and others are still struggling with it. However, everyone at the gathering expressed their appreciation for how Grace Chapel approached the messaging on the election - focusing on our relationship with each other."

- Lexington Group Member

"...my life has been gratefully enriched by my participation with Grace Chapel, which is continually working for the Kingdom of God. And none of the above would have been possible without incessant and intercessory prayer to fulfill God's purpose on Grace Chapel."

- Watertown Prayer Team Leader

"It's not only the knowledge and spiritual journey that we find at Grace Chapel, but a community based on the belief in becoming more like a selfless and loving God."

-Wilmington Campus Student



"Grace Chapel has helped me in my spiritual journey first and foremost by how welcoming you were to me, and the fact that I was so very close to leaving because I felt alone and lost in my faith. You helped me to realize that I wasn't alone because Jesus is with me and loves me and I feel that love through the staff, the congregation and all the people who attend Grace. Grace has also helped me by welcoming me to be part of the connection team; I love greeting people old and new at Grace with a smile and I always look forward to that. One last thing and most important, Grace has rejuvenated me in my Christian faith by my public baptism and being able to share my testimony with my family as well as my Grace family and friends. I have been reborn thanks to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and I want to thank Grace Chapel for helping me get there, I love you all, praise Jesus!"

- Foxboro Attender

"Today was my first day at Grace Chapel and I enjoyed the service. I have not stepped in a church since I was 12 years old (and I am now in my 50's). I had attended the Alpha Group last November and really enjoyed it."

- First Time Guest

"It has been a true joy watching the students at Watertown Student Ministries grow up and grow in the Lord over the past four years that I've served at Grace Chapel. Students built true friendship with each other and became increasingly involved in the Scriptures, more so since Brad's joining. It's an honor to work alongside this amazing team."

- Watertown Student Leader

growing our community

kidstown

Helping
children
develop a
relationship
with Jesus

1,954

Kids Served

31

Kids Dedicated

44


Bibles Given

217

Volunteers

401

Kids Week Attenders



Building a strong faith foundation in your kids can be hard. We're here to help! Our Kidstown children's ministry partners with parents to help grow and nurture the faith of their child through all the stages of their young life.

Sunday morning Kidstown is designed to teach your child about God in a fun way and allow them to see God in action each week! In Kidstown, our mission is to help children develop a relationship with Jesus. Kids will learn that the Bible stories we read are not just accounts of the past but can be applied to our lives today.

Toddlers and Preschoolers learn about the love of Jesus through music, crafts, play time, and video Bible lessons.



Elementary kids participate in large group skits and table discussions, worship with fun dance moves, and play games to learn about and build Biblical character.

Kids Week

This year over 400 kids joined us across all of our campuses for the best week of the year! This year's theme was "Start the Party! Celebrate the Good News." We're grateful for the amazing team of volunteers who gave so many kids a week to remember.

growing our community

students

**Leading
students to
discover,
develop,
and own
their faith**

403

Students Served

63

Volunteers

27

Bibles Given

71

CCLE Participants

308

*Fall & Winter
Retreat Attendees*

This year of Student Ministry has been marked with a lot of wonderful growth in our community and our walk with God. In Summer 2024, we had 89 students and adults travel to Dorchester, MA, Philadelphia, PA, Lewiston, ME, and Guatemala for Cross-Cultural Learning Experiences. Students were challenged to see their relationship with God take on tangible expressions of service, rather than just being a family tradition or a collection of stories.

The teaching themes through the school year continued to have God jump off the pages of the Bible and into day-to-day interactions. In the Fall, we covered lessons detailing the encounters that people had with Jesus in the Gospel of John and we learned about spiritual practices that can continue to lead us into moments of encounter. As the new year began, we took time to wrestle with challenges that people have with the Bible and how to better understand it as a collective work in its context. In the Spring, we focused on two areas of scripture - the Sermon on the Mount and Ecclesiastes - to better see what it means to take on a kingdom mindset in our lives and values. Our students have been engaged in discussion around these themes, and our team is so thankful for the volunteers who have asked good questions and mentored our students toward a more vibrant "discovery of life with God."

"The practical application of the gospel has been critical for my teen's spiritual growth. The last three years in StuMin have shaped her faith in more ways than I had expected. Her relationship with God went from 0 to 60 during these years. I'm grateful, humbled and excited about her walk with Christ."

- Student Ministry Parent

"I can't believe my daughter is helping to lead a middle school girls group and she just recently told me one of the girls she has been talking with got baptized last weekend! And to see her posting scripture on social media and see her carrying her Bible warms my heart and spirit."

- Student Ministry Parent

"I love that you ask the youth to help lead worship. Helping to lead worship has been a wonderful opportunity for my girls to use their gifts for music to bless others and themselves."

- Student Ministry Parent




growing our impact

our impact



"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you."

—John 15:16



The gospel of Matthew ends with Jesus' command to discipleship and evangelism. "Jesus came and told his disciples, 'I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'" - Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT)

Missions at Grace Chapel is about doing the gospel work of sharing the good news of Jesus and making disciples across cultures - locally and around the globe. We call those we serve alongside our *Partners*. Just like in business and other non-church endeavors, Partners are associates, colleagues, or co-workers with whom we share a close relationship in order to accomplish a specific task. At Grace, this means our Partners receive regular prayer, as well as personal and financial support from our congregation.

When possible, we send well-trained teams of volunteers to learn from and serve alongside our Partners. We call these teams *Cross Cultural Learning Experiences*, or *CCLE's*. Last summer, middle and high school students served cross-culturally in four locations domestically and overseas.

Earlier this year, a Grace Chapel team led a virtual CCLE training for pastors and church leaders in Nepal, while another team of adults participated in a CCLE to Guatemala, serving alongside one of our Partners, Potter's House.

Although all our Partners primarily serve outside our church walls, our missions ministry embraces and expresses to them our love and care across the miles and across diverse cultures. Many of our current ministry Partners are nationals serving in their home cultural contexts. They bear witness to the truth that the church's mission today is "from everywhere to everywhere," extending Christian mission to all people and places.

Grace Chapel has 46 Ministry Partners; 40 active and 6 retired. The active Partners serve in the areas of Bible translation, church planting, community development, theological education, and evangelistic proclamation, as well as serving as Jesus' hands and feet in mercy and justice ministries.

To facilitate a more meaningful connection with our diverse, multi-campus congregation, Partners have a home base at a local Grace Chapel campus. When they come to Grace Chapel for a visit and throughout the year, partners are encouraged to connect with their campus to deepen relational ties and experience meaningful prayer and support.

Missions Highlights

Our virtual CCLE with Nepal allowed a team from Grace Chapel to train a group of Nepalese pastors and church leaders on zoom in how to use the "Kingdom Living" curriculum which was written by Grace Chapel members.

An adult CCLE continues to build relational connections while serving "the treasures" of Potter's House. This is the 4th time several members of this team have traveled to Guatemala. Potter's House is an indigenous ministry serving the materially poor whose lives are focused around

garbage dump communities across Guatemala. The team participated in women's ministry, worked on vegetable gardens and completed hygiene stations for two families, distributed a hot, nutritious meal to children participating in an after school enrichment program and brought diagnostic testing materials to the Potter's House health clinic.

Last Fall, our congregation responded generously to the humanitarian relief efforts of our Partner, Cedar Home for Girls (led by Karim & Rita Anayssi) and Resurrection Church Beirut in the aftermath of the war in Lebanon with Israel. Through the generosity of SRG, an organization focused on ministry to the Middle East, we were able to secure a 1-to-1 match, doubling the impact of the GAW and Christmas Eve special offerings. Thanks be to God!



GROWING OUR IMPACT

special offerings

Local
generosity,
global
impact

\$118,462

Benevolence

\$72,359

Christmas Eve

\$42,424

Global Awareness Week

\$9,656

Kids Week + Kidstown

\$162,385

CCLE Support

Christmas Eve Special Offering

This year, half of the Christmas Eve special offering went to Fostering Hope of New England. Fostering Hope equips and empowers churches and individuals to care for children and families impacted by foster care.

Globally, half of the Christmas Eve special offering went to Cedar Home for Girls and the Resurrection Church in Beirut, Lebanon where our ministry partners Karim and Rita Anayssi worship and serve. Both were able to continue their ongoing work of serving Christians and Muslims alike who were fleeing the war with Israel that targeted Hezbollah communities in southern Lebanon and specific neighborhoods in Beirut. Cedar Home provided shelter for a few families who were fleeing the conflict, offering them a safe place to live and recover from the war. With the girls who live in the home, meals were prepared and served to displaced neighbors in the height of the crisis last fall. Christians were acknowledged by a leading Lebanese Muslim cleric for their generosity and kindness in welcoming Muslims who were fleeing the conflict. Many were welcomed into homes and others had their needs provided for in tangible ways by the Christian community. This is the love of Christ in action.

"Thank you so much for your kind and loving donation! And not only did you help Cedar Home, you also helped the church we partner with, Resurrection Church in Beirut, who has had incredible influence and worked towards the good of so many families."



- Karim Anayssi, Director of Cedar Home for Girls in Lebanon

growing our stewardship

stewardship



Every year across New England, millions of trees weather seasons of change: frozen winters; hot, dry summers; winds, floods, and storms. And through it all they survive, adding a ring in their trunk to mark another year of growth. Trees do this because their roots reach deep and their branches grow wide in order to find the nutrients that sustain them.

What a beautiful metaphor for Grace Chapel.

This past fiscal year at Grace, we've experienced the kind of seasonal variety that is uniquely "New England" – from drought and cold to surprising abundance. God has been faithful through the generosity of our people, once again providing to sustain the ministry of this church.

The fiscal year started in May with our big One Church Sunday celebration in Lowell where we celebrated Pastor Bryan's 24 years as our Senior Pastor at Grace Chapel and he passed the baton to Pastor Joshua.

The new church year started with lots of energy, excitement and enthusiasm, and was followed by a strong three-week stewardship series in November focusing on Joy, Generosity, and Gratitude. For the past few years, November has become our stewardship teaching month leading up to the end of the calendar year. December is historically and understandably our largest giving month of the year, but unfortunately, last December did not meet our historical levels of giving and budget expectations; we missed our budget goal by \$347K.

Then eight months into Joshua's time at Grace, he resigned from the position as our Senior Pastor. Throughout the seasonal changes of this last fiscal year, the faithfulness and generosity of you – the people of Grace Chapel – has remained strong. You are the roots of this church, reaching deep to the sustaining faith that nourishes our growth, through all seasons.

In April, the last month of our fiscal year, our teaching team brought us through Lent, Good Friday and Easter Sunday and the giving from you,

the people of Grace, exceeded our monthly April budget goal. The strong month of giving in April wasn't enough to make up for the shortfall that was largely due to missing our budget goal in December, but we are very grateful that we ended up essentially flat in contributions year over year. Many of you gave generously beyond your regular giving to help us support our ministries and enabled continuation and momentum into this new fiscal year. That feels like something we can celebrate, and we give all the honor and glory to our great God for the way He has worked in and through us this past year!

With some hesitancy, given the political unrest, economic uncertainty, and our senior pastor transition, at this time last year the elders recommended a 5% increase to general fund contributions for FY25 over the FY24 actual results. That 5% increase was prayerfully submitted to just cover increasing costs of doing ministry even as we worked to reduce spending wherever possible, and the budget was approved by the congregation in June.

This budget included cost of living increases as well as increased expenses for utilities, facility maintenance, employee benefits and other costs outside of our control. With 27,312 gifts from 1,844 donors, General Fund contributions totaled \$8,583,849 in FY25, which was \$383K below our budget goal of \$8,967,027 but results were virtually flat to FY24 actual results. This included gifts to support regular church ministries and staff at all campuses, as well as funding to support our global and regional mission partners. Praise be to God and with gratitude to you – the faithful and generous people of Grace!

We are also grateful to the Grace Chapel Ministry Staff for watching the expenses carefully and ending the fiscal year expenses as closely as we could to align to our actual giving results. It is never easy, and the impact is quite real as we have

held several staff positions open and we will continue to do so to better align expenses with our giving.

The congregation also provided \$405,286 in special gifts including the Benevolence Fund, Global Awareness Week, Cross-Cultural Learning Experiences and other Special Offerings that were over and above General Fund giving to help meet the critical needs of people in our congregation, our local neighbors, and those serving Christ around the globe. There is more detailed information on our special offerings and impact addressed in our Missions Report.

What are we expecting FY26 to look like?

It is even harder to predict than last year, given the continued uncertainty in the world around us, a somewhat volatile economy, and the launch of a second Senior Pastor search. Considering these challenges, the elders are presenting a budget with an anticipated -3% decrease in contributions under actual FY25 revenue results with a goal of \$8,326,334. It is important to note that we were blessed with gifts at the end of the fiscal year that were above and beyond regular giving that allowed us to continue many critical ministry activities, but it wouldn't be wise to include unique gifts like this in a budget plan. We have mentioned in the last couple of annual reports that before the pandemic we were operating with a total revenue goal of a little over \$9.5 million for our general fund. Our total budget goal including general fund contributions and other revenue sources for FY26 is \$9,326,572.

As we worked our way through the budget process with the Finance Committee and the Board of Elders, we opted to be even more cautiously optimistic than we have in the past. All that being said – God is not impacted whatsoever by any of

these challenges, and He is our Hope. He has always provided for us in the past and we have no doubt that He will provide for us this coming year and beyond.

We continue to always strive to be good stewards of our resources and hold expenses where we are able. We are still committed to adding new ministries and new events that will help us grow and fulfill our mission in this cultural landscape we find ourselves in these days like our Foster Care ministry. We remain committed to our stewardship goals that address these budget challenges by always working to embed faithful stewardship more meaningfully in the life of our church. We continue to encourage people to take steps of faith on their giving journey while carefully watching our expenses to keep them aligned with actual revenue.

The Sale of 3 Militia Drive

In the Fall of 2023, the elders brought the potential sale of our 3 Militia Drive Office Building to a congregational vote, and the congregation voted overwhelmingly in favor of selling that property for \$6.9 million. One of our consistent goals as a church is to be good stewards of the resources that God has entrusted to our care, and the sale of this building is very much in keeping with that priority. We officially sold our 3 Militia Drive property on Friday, May 9th to 3-5 Militia Drive Redevelopment Group. The developer plans to construct two multi-story buildings that will contain 292 dwelling units, including 44 inclusionary dwelling units. We celebrate the opportunity to extend a warm welcome to the hundreds of new residents moving in just steps from our Lexington campus!

The project includes a six-story parking garage for 450 vehicles behind the West building, of which we have negotiated some

limited Sunday morning parking. The Board of Elders and our Finance Committee are providing wisdom and guidance regarding those resources which will be strategically invested in keeping with the goals we laid out at the time of the congregational vote. We never saw this opportunity coming, and the sale of this building was an incredible gift from God. It's yet one more example that we can never outgive God.

Good stewardship principles dictate that sustainable support for ongoing ministry needs to come through our regular sources of income, which includes general fund giving and rentals. The Elder Board plan is to allocate the sale proceeds into four categories: Growth, Ministry, Capital Expenditures, and Building Maintenance. These areas will support our Elder financial reserve, long term planning, and building maintenance. The renovations to 2 Militia Drive and 59 Worthen Road will provide the opportunity to create more efficient ministry working spaces for congregational needs including staff. It includes refreshed meeting spaces that serve staff, ministry teams, and groups. We are excited about offering on-campus meeting spaces that serve the ministry on Sundays and throughout the week!

Though fiscal 2025 reflected the New England weather in many ways, the roots of Grace Chapel go deep and the branches we've grown reach wide. We are still looking for new ways to introduce people to Jesus and to engage more and more people in the life of the church. We pray that God continues to show favor to us as a church called and committed to serve greater Boston and beyond – for His Kingdom purposes and for His glory alone!

Respectfully and prayerfully submitted,

Mark MacDonald
Executive Pastor

**May the God of
hope fill you with
all joy and peace
as you trust in
him, so that you
may overflow
with hope by
the power of the
Holy Spirit—
Romans 15:13**

FY26 Proposed Budget

	Year Ending 30-Apr-26 FY26 Budget	Year Ending 30-Apr-25 FY25	Year Ending 30-Apr-24 FY24	Year Ending 30-Apr-23 FY23	Year Ending 30-Apr-22 FY22
Net Income - Operating					
Operating Revenue					
Contributions	8,326,334	8,583,849	8,535,353	8,294,177	8,640,755
Operating Income					
Rental Income	678,060	678,095	557,458	356,135	175,137
Interest Income	175,000	75,618	101,733	39,535	5,805
Ministry Program Income	147,178	153,151	152,190	120,528	67,813
Total Operating Income	1,000,238	906,864	811,381	516,198	248,755
Total Operating Revenue	9,326,572	9,490,713	9,346,734	8,294,177	8,889,510
Operating Expenses					
Missions Partner Support	742,500	743,548	741,017	767,000	788,500
Other Charitable Contributions ¹	-	12,566	60,816	9,159	19,241
Total Missions Support	742,500	756,114	801,833	776,159	807,741
Ministry Support & Personnel	6,147,562	7,176,660	7,015,924	5,939,266	5,654,597
Facilities	1,350,563	1,190,846	1,312,494	1,235,178	1,203,999
IT	239,928	245,223	228,879	299,919	369,893
Financial & Legal Expenses ²	443,902	436,058	579,505	583,799	462,257
Total Operating Expense	8,924,455	9,804,901	9,938,635	8,834,321	8,498,487
Net Income - Operating	402,117	(314,188)	(591,901)	(540,144)	391,023
Debt					
Principal Payment ³	347,387	336,389	325,174	314,129	375,471
Total Debt Payments	347,387	336,389	325,174	314,129	375,471
Other Income ⁴	-	388,232	644,376	-	-
Cash Reserves Support	-	-	167,256	300,000	-
Total Net Results	54,730	(262,345)	(105,443)	(554,273)	15,552

Disclaimer: Unaudited Fiscal Years subject to change. Unaudited Fiscal Years: **FY25**

¹ Non Budgeted gifts/support to partners unrelated to CCLEs and other planned support

² Financial & Legal Expenses includes Income Processing Expense, Audit, Legal, and

³ Debt refinanced in FY23. New financing procured in FY23

⁴ FY24 Covid Relief Cares Act - Employee Retention Credit

General Fund Giving



*I am the vine; you are the
branches. Those who abide
in me and I in them
bear much fruit,
because apart from me you
can do nothing.*

- John 15:5

2025 NOMINEES

TERM 1 (2025 - 2029)

Susan Green, *Lexington*

Jim Citro, *Lexington*

TERM 2 (2025 - 2029)

Daniel Mitchell, *Wilmington*

Rebecca Li, *Lexington*

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Andrea Dacayanan, *Co-Chair, Lexington*

Daniel Mitchell, *Co-Chair, Wilmington*

Joshua Martin, *Lexington*
(year one of two)

Viorel Simion, *Wilmington*
(year one of two)

Marie Berthonia Antoine, *Foxboro*
(year two of two)

Raymond Yu, *Watertown*
(first year of two)

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Shana Barmoy
(year two of three)

Eric Bergstrom
(filling in for B.J. Poppe year 3 of 3)

Doug Thorpe
(year one of three)

MODERATOR

Don Vinh (year one of three)

CLERK

Sue Lim (year one of three)

Annual Meeting Notes

June 9, 2024

WELCOME: Executive Pastor Mark MacDonald opened the meeting at 12:30 PM. This year's theme is For Generations to Come.

CALL TO ORDER & PRAYER: Moderator Bob Williams presented the agenda and voting process. He explained that the meeting was being held in person and online, and was also recorded. To help set the theme for the meeting, he reminded us of the importance of being present in the lives of others – for example, through service and outreach efforts, by being in community with others.

SENIOR PASTOR REPORT: As we are between Senior Pastors, Executive Pastor Mark MacDonald gave the "senior pastor" report. This year's ministry theme came from Isaiah 43:19, "See, I am doing a new thing! It springs up; do you not perceive it?" Our vision was focused on the future. The year began with Pastor Bryan announcing his retirement. Highlights: Kids' Week, CCLEs, memberships, baptisms, Global Awareness Week, Christmas, and Easter. We found a new Senior Pastor, Joshua Clough, and then brought it all together with One Church Sunday. In the fall, we celebrated our 75th anniversary.

Strategic priorities: There were two. First, Discipleship, our second year of helping people explore their faith, this year focusing on Spiritual Perspectives. Second, Connecting, helping new people to connect, for which we created a new staff position; and helping others to find new ways to connect.

Teaching series:

- ✓ Up in the Air: Wisdom for Facing Change – Ecclesiastes
- ✓ Beginnings: Finding Our Roots – Genesis 1-12
- ✓ A World On The Move - Global Awareness Week
- ✓ Seeds of Grace - Stewardship
- ✓ And on Earth, Peace - Advent
- ✓ Kingdom Come: When God Does Something New - Mark 1-3
- ✓ Kingdom Come: Thy Will Be Done - Lent;
- ✓ Mark 11-16 Why I Still Believe - Affirming and maturing our faith

Finance: We signed a purchase and sale agreement on 3 Militia Drive.

A drawing of the proposed housing project that will replace the current buildings at 3, 4, and 5 Militia Drive was shown.

Our new Senior Pastor, Joshua Clough, gave us a video message about his recent activities as he and his family prepare to join us.

BOARD OF ELDERS REPORT: Keith Cerci, Chairman of the Board of Elders, presented the report.

Pastor Bryan announced his retirement in June 2023 and preached his last sermon on June 2, 2024. We will welcome Pastor Joshua Clough as our new Senior Pastor in July. We added many new members this year.

We are a congregationally governed church. Members vote on nominees for officers; the budget; and other matters of governance. We are led and served by a Board of Elders. Our Senior Pastor is our spiritual leader. Our Executive Pastor is our chief of staff. Our Executive Team of seven is in charge of operations. Our campuses are led by our Campus Pastor Teams, and supported by our Central Ministries and Ministry Support teams. Knowing all this should help us to feel less unsettled at a time of leadership transition.

The dedication of our staff; our commitment to unity, selflessness, authenticity, and transparency; our congregation's heart for volunteering; our resilience and gratitude; our prayer and faith; our global missions; and our One Church Sunday event were all noted.

TREASURER'S REPORT AND FY24 BUDGET: Kurt Drescher, Pastor of Stewardship gave the report on behalf of Treasurer Rebecca Li, who could not be present.

This year's budget included a 5% increase in General Fund contributions over the previous year, and we were able to meet that target with a total of \$8,535,353 in contributions. We not yet reached the pre-pandemic level of FY20 but are working toward it. We had 361 new givers and 150 new recurring givers. Our FY25 budget of \$8.9M represents a 5% increase over FY24 results.

FY24 special offerings were a total of \$183K; these unbudgeted funds were used to support a variety of efforts. Kids contributed \$10,392 from Kids' Week and \$2,300 from Kidstown offerings in Lexington, bringing hope for our future.

The FY25 budget projects operating revenue of \$9,820,020. Rental income has increased. A \$450K safety and security grant from FEMA will be paid as soon as work under the

Annual Meeting Notes (cont.)

grant has been completed.

Total projected operating expenses for FY25 are \$9,484,391.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT: Co-Chair Andrea Dacayanan presented the slate of nominees.

- First Term Elders: Kevin Johnson, Victor Gerdes, David Prince
- Second Term Elders: Keith Cerci
- Nominating Committee: Andrea Dacayanan, Daniel Mitchell, Raymond Yu, Geoffrey Lum, Caleb Harty, Marie Berthonia Antoine
- Audit Committee: Shana Barmoy, Timothy Nelson, B.J. Poppe
- Moderator: Robert Williams
- Clerk: Alethea Yates

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Pastor Jeannette Yep will represent Grace Chapel at the Fourth Lausanne Congress this September in Seoul, South Korea. Some demographic trends noted by Lausanne: Sub-Saharan Africa will become the world's most populous region; the world's population is aging; half of the world is middle-class or wealthier; 90% of the world's young people live in the Global South; Africa is now the most Christian continent. The representative face Christianity, formerly a white European male, will probably become in 2050 a young African woman.

An Open Doors report says that political instability, war, and extremism have created a perilous situation for many Christians. Increasing numbers of people worldwide have been displaced from their homes. This presents great opportunities to love and serve people.

VOTING: Mark McDonald presented an overview of the voting process. Members could vote online or by paper ballot until June 23.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SESSION: Bob Williams moderated the Q&A session. Questions could be asked in person or submitted by email.

Following the sale of 3 Militia, how soon will our remaining buildings be renovated for our new space needs? We will close on the sale of 3 Militia in the spring of 2025; as part of the transaction, we will stay rent-free in that building for another year while we renovate our other buildings with income from the sale, and will then move

into our new facilities in the spring of 2026.

What is our current membership, and our average attendance across the churches?
Average weekly attendance is around 3,500-4,000. Our membership is 1,881.

Looking at a substantial decrease in the budget, especially in ministry support and personnel, what are we getting this year that we aren't getting next year? The decrease of around \$200K has two causes: A change in the timing of payroll, and a request to all areas of ministry that they decrease their spending. No particular ministry area was eliminated.

What is our debt outstanding? About \$3M.

What's in the Cash Reserve Support line in the '24 budget? This is from the Elder Reserve; the Elders voted to use this reserve money during the pandemic to keep us from having to cut services.

Any additional questions that come in online will be added to the FAQ section of the web site.

CLOSING PRAYER: Tim Min, Vice-Chair of the Board of Elders, closed the meeting in prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Alethea Yates,
Clerk



GRACE CHAPEL

20
25

2025 ANNUAL REPORT