



Grace Presbyterian Church

Calgary, Alberta

Congregational Profile 2021-2022 2023/06/27 update

In a spirit of respect and truth we honour and acknowledge that we live, work and play on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Stoney Nakoda Nations (Bearspaw, Chiniki, and Wesley), the Métis Nation (Region 3), and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta.



Grace Presbyterian Church
Transforming lives through God's grace



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Our Vision

Transforming lives through God's grace

A prayer based on Our Vision:

Gracious God,

*You call us to be a people who transform lives through your grace.
Help us to be open to your transforming light
so we can be a beacon for others*

*You call us to be inspired by the Holy Spirit,
so that we can help people become disciples,
love their neighbours,
and change the world in your ways.*

*Help us to become your disciples,
steeped in love,
ready to be sent into a world in deep pain and need.*

*Help us to serve Grace Church so it can be a place of belonging for
those who are lost,
a community of compassion for those in turmoil,
a place of service where people learn to be engaged in love.*

Amen.



Our Mission

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, we grow disciples of Jesus Christ to love our neighbours and effect social change.

Our Values

Belonging, Community, Compassion, Engagement, and Service

Our values guide our attitudes and actions as we seek to embody God's love revealed through the life of Jesus Christ:

- ♦ *Belonging:* We ensure everyone feels like Grace is a place they are welcome.
- ♦ *Community:* We seek out connections with those around us.
- ♦ *Compassion:* We celebrate that everyone is worthy of love and belonging just as they are.
- ♦ *Engagement:* As we exercise our faith, we seek to engage with and be engaged by the people and stories we encounter.
- ♦ *Service:* We give ourselves through community projects and involvement. Jesus is a servant leader, and his love is always revealed in service to others.

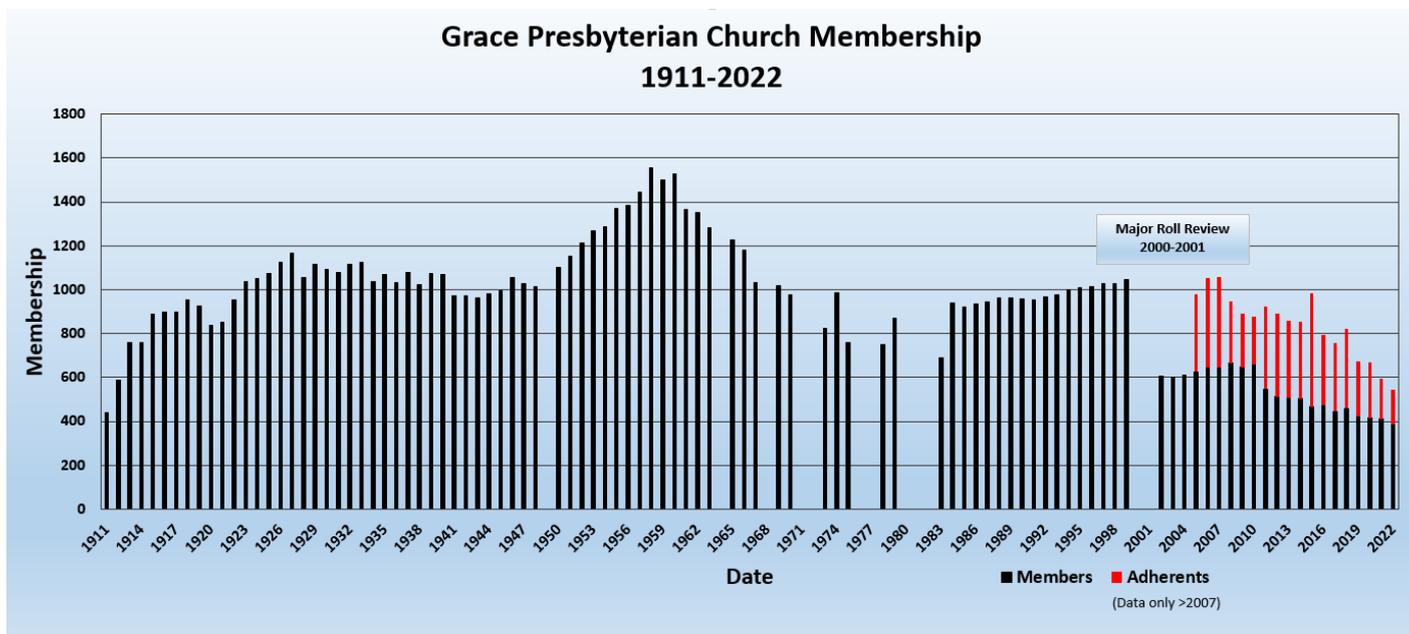
Our People

Grace Presbyterian Church, like many older downtown churches, attracts people from all corners of the city and beyond. Calgary encompasses a large land area which means many people commute to participate in the Church's activities.

People who call Grace their church home have changed over the years, reflecting the evolving demographics in Calgary and across Canada. Grace has evolved from a church with members from the British Isles, the Netherlands and other parts of Northern Europe, followed by a significant number of American citizens. Our congregation now includes people from the U.K., Egypt, Ethiopia, South Sudan, India, South Korea, and China to name a few.

In addition to ethnic diversity, Grace's membership also reflects socioeconomic diversity. Our members include students, professionals, people who stay at home as caregivers, people who are seeking a new start in life, and retirees.

In the early 2000s, Grace was home to approximately 600 members. In the last few years, numbers have decreased to just under 400 members. Despite the decline in membership, we remain active in weekly worship and other fellowship opportunities. Prior to the pandemic, our weekly Sunday morning worship attendance was over 200.





Committee Structure

Grace is led by the Session composed of 12 Ruling Elders and the called Teaching Elders. In addition, there are currently 10 Service Elders who support their districts by providing visits and pastoral care. The Service Elders also contribute to committees that focus on specific aspects of Grace's life and work.

The diagram on the following page illustrates the committee organization at Grace. Please note that the Finance, Human Resources and Facilities Committees oversee what was traditionally the portfolio for the Board of Managers. In addition to the committees shown, ad hoc committees are formed as needed to address specific topics.





*Inactive

Committee Structure at Grace

The Ministry Team

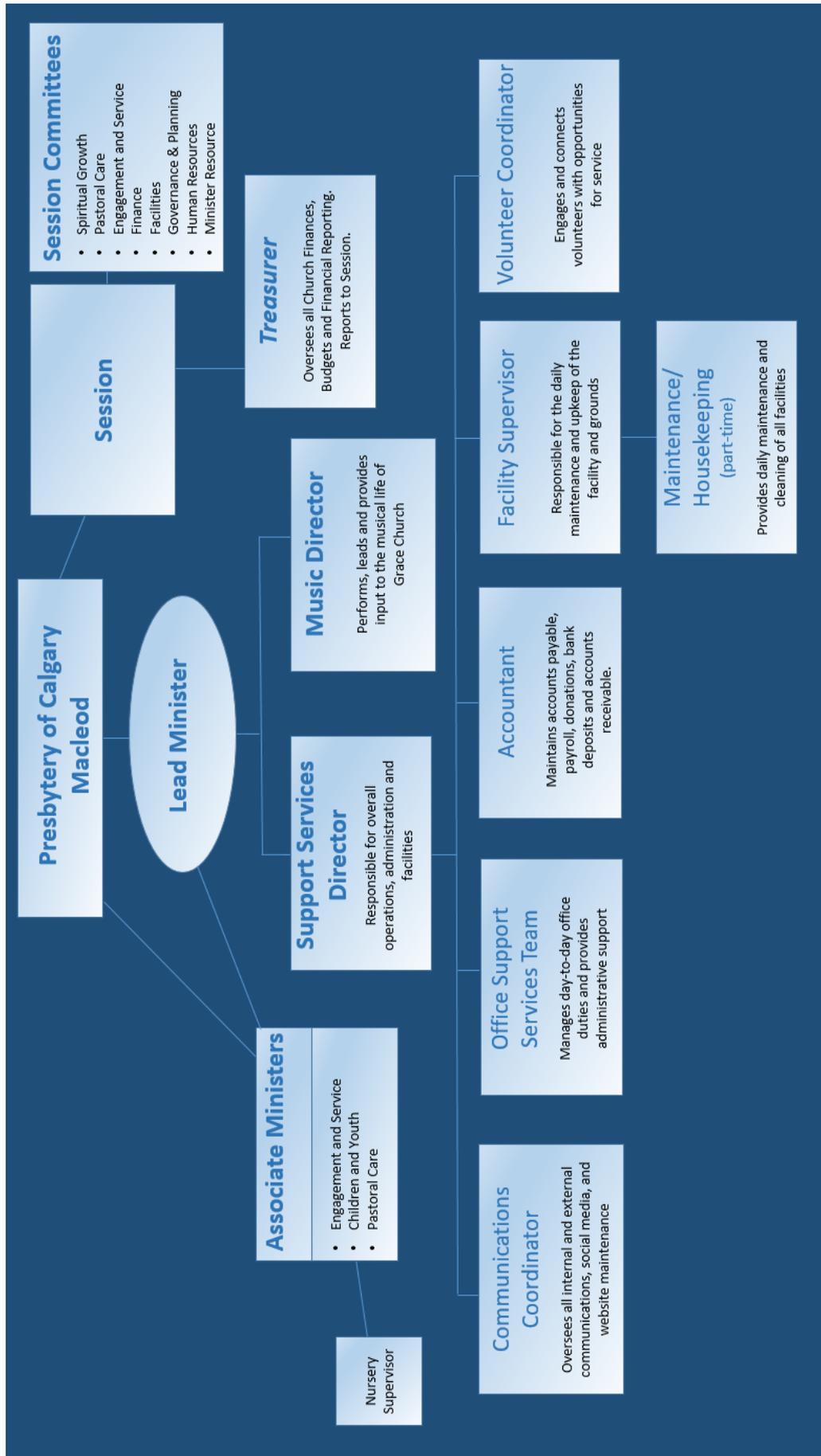
The ministry team (Teaching Elders) is responsible for helping Grace Presbyterian Church develop and maintain a shared sense of faith, belonging, connection, trust, communication, and community in accordance with their specific roles and positions. The current ministry team at Grace consists of the Rev. Jake Van Pernis, Associate Minister, Engagement and Service, and Interim Moderator, the Rev. Dr. Jean Morris. The Associate Minister, Children and Youth, and Associate Minister, Pastoral Care positions are currently vacant and being reviewed. Grace is also pleased to welcome two retired ministers, the Rev. Wendy Adams and the Rev. Geoffrey Simmons, who will support all areas of ministry through March 2024.



The Rev. Jake Van Pernis
Associate Minister, Engagement and Service

In addition to the Ruling and Teaching Elders, Grace has about 10 full- and part-time staff members (paid and volunteers, and the number fluctuates with seasonal needs) who support the day-to-day operations of the Church. Our Office Support and Facilities staff are responsible for ensuring that Grace operates in an efficient and effective manner, while providing a healthy, welcoming, caring and attractive congregational environment.

Our team organization is shown on the following page:



Grace Organization Chart



Grace volunteers

We are also blessed to have over 180 active volunteers, who contribute over 21,200 hours annually. These volunteers include three specially trained active Deacons (commissioned but not ordained) who support, under the direction of the Pastoral Care Committee: Bereavement, Homebound Visits and Hospital Visits. All our volunteers are essential to Grace, and make significant contributions to almost every aspect of our Church life.

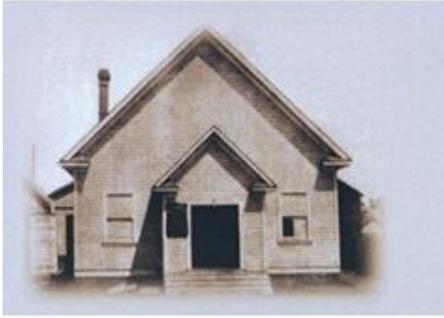
Our Location

Grace Presbyterian Church is in the Beltline area in Calgary, which is just south of downtown. The Beltline area has a high proportion of younger adults, well educated people, and single person households. While this may suggest that the Beltline is a highly affluent area, over 1 in 4 households with children under 18 are considered low-income households and there is a noticeable homeless population.

The Beltline area is highly mobile. In reviewing previous censuses, the population does not age over time. Instead, people move away when they get older and/or when they start a family. Younger adults move into the area to replace the people who left.



Data from the 2021 census show that over half (52%) of the respondents in the Beltline did not have any religious affiliation. 35% reported Christianity as their religion. The Beltline population presents a unique opportunity to share God's Good News and to invite people to be a part of God's community.



Grace Church ca 1905



Grace Church ca 1915



Grace Church 2021

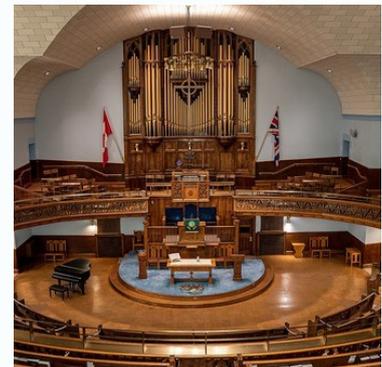
Our Facilities

Grace Presbyterian is a large urban church located adjacent to downtown Calgary. We are in an area with specific inner city needs and significant opportunities.

The congregation of Grace Presbyterian Church began in 1905 (the same year Alberta became a province in the Dominion of Canada!) as a suburban church and it moved into its current building in 1913.

Our members continue to be people of vision and commitment. For our centennial in 2005, we proudly created our Hall of History, a physical display behind our Sanctuary, and *A Century of Grace, 1905-2005*, a 500+ page book documenting "an historical rendering of the lives of the people of Grace Presbyterian Church."

We are blessed to worship in a beautiful historic Sanctuary, which helps create an atmosphere of reverence as we seek to glorify God with our praise and with our lives. The Casavant 4-manual organ is the third largest in the city and we enjoy a long-standing partnership with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra. The Chapel, also with a pipe organ, is a smaller, more intimate space than the main Sanctuary, seating about 75 people. It was added in 1962.



Sanctuary



Casavant Pipe Organ



Chapel



2019 Stampede Breakfast

Hospitality and a sense of belonging are important to us. We believe worship and mission are interconnected. We seek to engage the community through various ministries in the Church and through service with organizations in the community. Pre-COVID, our Church building was busy every day of the week! We held programs such as our English Language Learners (ELL) that welcomed more than forty newcomers to Canada Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Our parking lot (transitioned to our Outdoor Living Room in 2021!) has hosted Trunk ‘n’ Treat, Easter Egg Hunts, as well as Community Care Outreach work. We have celebrated “Neighbour Day” each June, which included clowns, face painting and a community garage sale. Each year we also prepared and served a Stampede Breakfast and invited the community to join the congregation for breakfast before morning worship. In 2021, this was changed to a [Virtual Stampede Party video](#), which showed people how to make buttermilk pancakes, line dance, and flip a pancake.

The lower level of our facility houses a gymnasium and dining area (used to host everything from children and youth events, to receptions, meetings and community groups). Adjacent to the dining area is a modern commercial-sized kitchen, which has cooked many delightful meals and baked untold numbers of Christmas cakes.

Sunday school classes are held primarily on the lower level, but have also used the Chapel, second floor Board room, the gymnasium and youth room. A main floor nursery is also a well-used room, providing care for children 18 months to 3 years, where infants have also been accommodated.



Outdoor Sunday School



Grace Quilters and Volunteers in the parking lot

Beyond our main facility, we are also fortunate to own two parking lots (a necessity for an urban Church with a large proportion of the congregation commuting from the suburbs). Both lots are managed by a commercial parking provider and represent a source of revenue for the congregation. We also own a share in a neighbourhood apartment building and the *RESET* House. That, in cooperation with the *RESET Society of Calgary*, provides shelter for women escaping the sex trade industry.

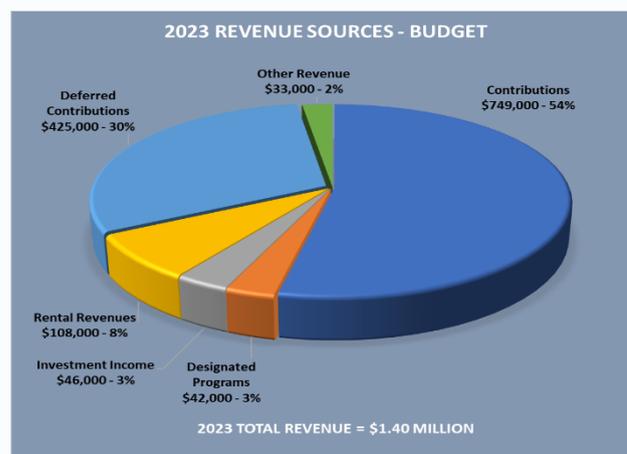
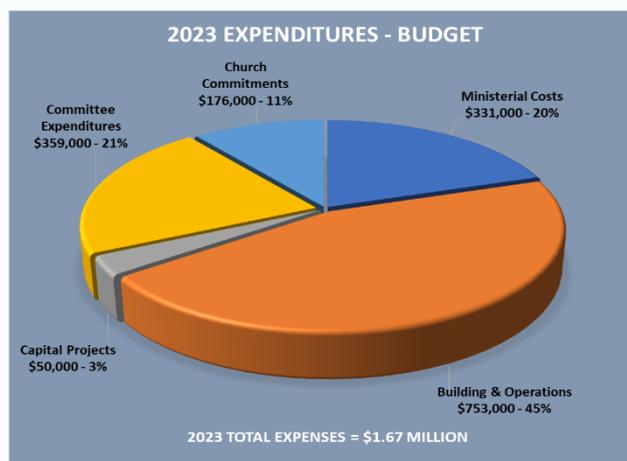
Finances

Our facilities are large and functional, but maintenance and operational costs of a century-plus-old building are also significant. The main sandstone Church has undergone several large-scale renovations (including roofing, sandstone restoration, heating system replacement, and kitchen upgrades to name a few). Fortunately, Grace is blessed with an exceptionally generous congregation, and such projects were completed without incurring any debt.

Recently, our financial resources have been challenged due to declining membership and the impact of COVID on in-person worship. Our year end [2022 unaudited financial report](#) is available. Note that monthly financial updates are on the [Grace Website](#). In summary, Net Assets were approximately \$5.6 million, of which \$3.7 million consists of Deferred Restricted Contributions. These Funds can, with Session approval, be allocated to designated areas. Specific areas include Capital Fund (major building enhancements), Operations, Missional/Outreach, Children and Youth, Music, and Ministerial Support. These Funds also represent our “rainy day” fund and have and are being used to address budget deficits.

Looking forward, our [approved budget for 2023](#) is illustrated in the following two charts.

In terms of expenditures, our major expense by far is Operations (\$753 thousand illustrated as Building and Operations in the pie chart), followed by Ministerial Costs (\$331 thousand), Committee Expenditures (consisting mainly of Spiritual Growth at \$166 thousand and Engagement and Services at \$146 thousand). Also noted in the 2023 Expenditures diagram are Church Commitments(\$176 thousand), representing, among other items, Presbytery and Synod dues, and a Congregational Assessment to address ministers' pension plans.



In actual numbers revenues are forecast to be \$1.40 million, and expenses \$1.67 million, resulting in a shortfall of about \$270 thousand. This will necessitate using additional funds from our Deferred Restricted Contributions to produce a balanced budget at year end 2023. The shortfall is concerning, but less than previous years. This will be monitored and addressed throughout the year. In addition, an [ad hoc Stewardship Committee](#) was established to pursue Christ-centred stewardship.

Year-end 2022 financials are available [on the website](#). Some positive trends are evident: expenditures were under budget, while donations (and the number of donors) and rental revenues, exceeded budget numbers.



The Sanctuary



The Rev. Sabino Diok

Our Mission and Values in Action

Worship

Our in-person worship is held on Sunday mornings at 10:30 am in the Sanctuary. The service follows a reformed liturgy focusing on Scripture and Sacraments. During the year, a series of seasonal worship services are offered including Lent, Easter, Advent, and Christmas. Prior to the pandemic Grace also held a Sunday evening worship service called *Evening Grace*. This was an intimate service of prayer and a sermon, held on the first and third Sunday evenings in our Chapel. This service was developed for those unable to attend morning worship.

Early in 2020, provincial public health restrictions limited in-person gathering and in response Grace launched an online worship service titled 3 in 1. (All episodes are available on the [Grace YouTube Channel](#)). Approximately 175 worshippers joined the virtual service every week as we praised and listened to God's word. From 2020 to 2021 there were over 13,500 views of Sunday Service on YouTube. Grace now offers a hybrid service model where members can worship in-person or through live streaming. In 2022, online worship viewers averaged 94 per week, while weekly in-person attendance averaged about 100. Post-COVID in-person attendance is increasing steadily and many weeks reaches 150 (especially during Advent).

South Sudanese and Anyuak Congregational Worship Services

The South Sudanese congregation gathers and worships with the Rev. Sabino Diok in the Grace Chapel every Sunday afternoon. The Anyuak Ethiopian Community, led by Pastor Olul, also has made use of the Chapel for Sunday services. Grace is grateful to be able to offer a place of worship for members of these communities and is seeking to explore opportunities for deeper relationships with them.



**Grace Choir and the congregation:
Sunday morning worship**



**Grace Kids and Leaders in the
Sanctuary (pre-COVID) and
outside (during COVID)**



Music Program

Music is a vital component of worship at Grace. Our services are enriched by the hymns, anthems and solos sung by the 30 member *Grace Choir* accompanied by the Grace Memorial Organ and a Kawai Grand Piano. The Casavant, originally built and installed by the Canadian Organ Company in 1912, has been restored and upgraded several times, most recently in 2002.

We embrace traditional Christian music, but also explore more contemporary selections. Throughout the year we also welcome special musical offerings by the 8-10 members of the *Handbell Choir*, vocalists, and instrumentalists. The Music Program at Grace is led by Matthew Kallio, Music Coordinator.

Sunday School Program

Growing and nurturing the Children's Ministry is an important part of fulfilling the vision of Grace as a missional church. Grace is blessed with a spirited Sunday School group consisting of *Grace Kids* (under 12 years old), *Grace Youth* (over 12 years old) and a *Nursery program* (infants and toddlers).

Grace Kids and *Grace Youth* meet Sunday mornings to worship through music, hear Scripture, share their thoughts and have fun. *Grace Youth* also hosts casual gatherings for our older students to connect as a community through events such as Sunday lunches.

Grace Kids and Grace Youth Sunday Worship Weekly Attendance Numbers		
Sunday Worship Attendance	Under 12	Over 12
Online Zoom (During Pandemic)	5-15	2-5
In-person (Post-Pandemic)	5-19	1-7



Community Christmas Party 2021, Family blessings at the Zoo; Preaching Grace 2022

In addition to Sunday morning worship, numerous special events are held throughout the year such as the Pancake Party, [Easter Egg Hunt](#), Trunk 'n' Treat, Christmas Party, Blessing of the Animals at the Zoo and Summer Pop-up Play.

In response to the pandemic, *Grace Kids* and *Grace Youth* moved online for Sunday worship and outdoors for activities. During the summer, "Summer Sundays" had more than 20 registered families and continued its spiritual support for the children by offering "take home faith formation kits."

The Children's Ministry and the Spiritual Growth Committee continue to work together to support the healthy spiritual development of our youth.

Small Group Studies

Grace believes that providing education to ground us in reformed faith to be important for spiritual growth. We continue to transform the lives of each other by meeting for small group studies. Grace hosts numerous Bible and book studies where meaningful conversations help us grow and mature our faith.

Preaching Grace

Since 2016, Grace has been hosting a yearly event where leading theologians and preachers have been invited to help us explore Christianity and faith. *Preaching Grace* is a weekend long event consisting of a Friday public lecture, Saturday Workshop and Sunday Worship Service. The Margaret and Robert Montgomery Fund provides for this event. The Fund was initiated to share their appreciation for excellence in preaching with the people of Grace and the community. More information regarding [the 2023 program](#) can be found on the Grace website.



Grace Quilters; Brown Bagging for Calgary's Kids volunteers; Outdoor summer fellowship

Fellowship Opportunities

Members of Grace are engaged in various fellowship groups. We hope to see these grow to support the emerging needs of the congregation and the community. Current groups/events include *Grace Bethany*, *The Cake Bake*, [Grace Quilters](#) and *DWELL*. Some of these events have been held for over 50 years and have raised funds for supporting local charities and mission activities. Others have been established more recently responding to the changing interests and needs of the congregation.

Grace Quilters meet regularly to create beautiful handmade quilts that support the ministry of pastoral care, baptism and provide *Quilts of Belonging* to the women of *RESET*. During the pandemic, the quilters have also expanded their services to the community by sewing and distributing hundreds of masks.

DWELL is a program originally envisioned as an opportunity to connect with the community for coffee, prayer, scripture and discussion. With COVID, *DWELL* has been held on Zoom primarily with members of Grace. We look forward to expanding *DWELL* into the community after the pandemic.

Going forward, Grace desires to foster more affinity groups to nurture the evolving community of Grace.



Food Bank volunteers; Volunteers in Grace's Commercial Kitchen

Our Community Outreach

As previously mentioned, Grace is part of the Beltline Community. This location provides Grace with the opportunity to reach out to our neighbours. Several programs are currently attempting to address some of the needs of our inner-city community.

The Food Bank Project

In 2019, Grace became a [satellite depot](#) for the Calgary Food Bank where individuals and families can pick up an emergency hamper closer to home. The volunteers from Grace and the community are serving up to 20 families each week around the Beltline area. This project is possible thanks to dedicated volunteers from Grace, Calgary Rotary West and members of the community. Food insecurity has been in Grace's conversations for many years and Grace is using this opportunity to partner with agencies to better serve the community.

Grace's Connaught School Food Program

The Connaught School Food Program is another project which shows Grace's commitment to help reduce food insecurity for children and families in the Beltline community. Grace's initial partnership with charities such as Brown Bagging for Calgary's Kids has developed special relationships with Connaught Elementary School. Kids at Connaught come from families of various socio-economic backgrounds and are reflective of the Beltline neighbourhood. Grace volunteers purchase groceries for the school pantry where students have access to food, and after Sunday worship Grace volunteers prepare school lunch bags for the kids. During the pandemic, many families and children were cut off from access to school-supplied food and Grace re-directed the funds to I Can for Kids to replace food packs with grocery gift cards.



ELL students (pre-COVID); Coldest Night of the Year; Community Care Booth

ELL Program

[English Language Learners \(ELL\)](#) is a program offered to help new Canadians improve their conversational English skills. ELL is led by a wonderful team of volunteers who create a welcoming space for everyone. As often is the case with many other programs offered at Grace, ELL has served as not only a place to learn but to build friendships and form a community.

Coldest Night of the Year

This is an annual fundraiser event where Grace Presbyterian Go-Getters meet to walk around Downtown Calgary to support Feed the Hungry Calgary and KAIROS Calgary (KAIROS Calgary brings 130 churches from 10 denominations together to help homeless families) during the Coldest Night of The Year.

Community Care Booth

During the summer of 2020, a tent was set up in the parking lot of Grace as a place for “coffee and chat” for the people of the community. Word traveled fast and many people who might otherwise not consider approaching the Church came to connect with our Community Care Deacon and the volunteers. The Booth allowed Grace to connect with neighbours, immigrants, newcomers, and low income and homeless folks in need of some hot chocolate, a snack and uplifting conversation. As the weather cooled, the [Community Care Booth](#) team continued to provide care by engaging in “walk and talk” with the members of the neighbourhood.



**Trunk 'n' Treat 2019; RESET Christmas Gift Bags and volunteers;
Shrove Tuesday Community Pancake Dinner 2020**

RESET Society of Calgary

This is Grace's ninth year providing women of *RESET* with Christmas Gift Bags. *RESET* is an organization which provides support for women who have been victims of sexual exploitation and/or trafficking. Grace's involvement with *RESET* began 25 years ago when Grace first started to host young women at what was then called McKenzie House. This housing project evolved into Servants Anonymous, which is known today as Grace House. Grace House now serves as a safe, supported transitional shelter for young women and their children. Pre-COVID, Grace hosted poignant graduations of *RESET* women that were meaningful to all present, including ministers and volunteers.

Neighbourhood Family Events

Families are central to Grace. Grace has been working with families in the community for more than a century and continues to offer support in various ways. Grace has around 60 community families whom we see at our 'invite the neighbourhood' family events such as the Pancake Supper, Easter Egg Hunt, Trunk 'n' Treat and the Christmas Family Party.

Trunk 'n' Treat is held to involve the families living in Beltline area apartments where trick or treat can be challenging. Grace's parking lot was transformed into a spooky venue where children could safely trick or treat.

We are grateful that these programs serve as inter-generational events that extend out to the community.



Red Paint Splatters; Conversations on the Steps; Lament Ceremony (2021)

Indigenous Truth, Healing and Reconciliation

Early on the morning of July 1, 2021, Grace was one of several churches across the city that was splattered with red paint. At Grace, red paint was found on two of the front doors. This was seen as an act of protest and an expression of grief in response to the [discoveries](#) of numerous unmarked graves at the sites of former residential schools in Kamloops, Cowessess, Cranbrook and elsewhere in Canada.

The red paint splattered on Grace's doors has elicited many responses and reactions, generating many conversations, both within Grace and in the larger community (Indigenous communities and the Calgary media). The red paint also inspired Grace to begin walking the path of truth, healing, and reconciliation / reconcili-action, trusting in the Spirit's lead as we do so.

Steps along the path have included the formation of an ad-hoc committee, a Service of Lament, a Kairos Blanket Exercise, and a book study on *These Mountains Are Our Sacred Places* written by Chief and the Rev. John Snow and led by the Rev. John Snow Jr. and Tony Snow.

The hope of the work Grace has done and is doing around truth, healing, and reconciliation is that it is meaning-filled and meaningful, undertaken with faith, honesty and intention. It is our prayer that, with the Spirit's guidance, we will work together and, with the grace of God, be transformed.

For more information on Grace's response, please visit the [Grace website](#).

Our Future

Grace is a congregation in transition and, following the departure some of our ministers, has been in a period of prayerful review, reflection and interim ministry.

Session has created a [Strategic Plan](#) for the next 3 years. The document focuses on three key strategies:

- 1. Provide congregational care and support, and encourage engagement,**
- 2. Grow community collaboration and connection, and**
- 3. Nurture the evolving culture at Grace.**

Grace is continuing along our century-plus-long faith journey, as we discern how God is calling us to serve our friends and neighbours throughout the Beltline, Calgary, Canada and the world in the 21st century. The journey is never easy. In the past several years our congregation and the world have changed dramatically. We faced COVID, including the closure and eventual partial reopening of our facilities, a transition to ZOOM, on-line and streaming worship, transitioning to a world of Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube and began to face the truth of residential schools. In the midst of all this, we continue, with God's help, to address the needs of our congregants and neighbours, with worship, baptisms, communions, weddings, funerals, the addition of new members, establishing a Food Bank satellite location, a Community Outreach program and numerous Children's and Adult COVID safe activities.

Thank you for reviewing our Congregational Profile. As Grace embraces the challenges of the pandemic and our future, we continue to explore and deepen our faith. We are eager to move forward with our vision of "Transforming Lives through God's Grace."

To find out more about Grace Presbyterian Church, please refer to our website at www.GraceChurchCalgary.com.



www.GraceChurchCalgary.com