

# GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Sandusky, Ohio

Parish Profile 2010



Grace Church is a welcoming community, inviting everyone to learn, serve, and share Christ's love.



# GRACE PARISH HIGHLIGHTS

## *OUR STRENGTHS*

- A loving and welcoming parish which embraces our mission statement: Grace Church is a welcoming community, inviting everyone to learn, serve and share Christ's love.
- 255 baptized members from 150 families committed to meaningful worship, ministry, and a sense of family and community
- Environment in which our next rector's gifts can grow, expand, flourish, and ultimately complement our own
- Highly talented organist/choir director and dedicated choir
- Church located in beautiful park setting in downtown Sandusky since 1835
- Significant endowment carefully utilized to help serve current and future needs of our parish, as well as in the local and global communities

## *WHOM WE ARE CALLING*

- Will inspire us with meaningful sermons and encourage parish fellowship and hospitality
- Will promote Christian education and recreation, especially for youth, teenagers, and young families
- Will be compassionate, pastoral and energetic, and possess a sense of humor
- Will share in our commitment to outreach
- Will work in concert with vestry to guide and manage the affairs of the parish

## *PARISH GOALS*

- Deepen and expand our faith and ministry
- Invest in Christian formation of our youth
- Build on commitment to community outreach
- Engender stewardship of our time and talent

## *OUTREACH TO THE COMMUNITY*

- Firelands Regional Medical Center, successor to Good Samaritan Hospital founded by Grace Church and parish members in the late 1800s
- Thrift Shop in operation for 60 years, giving clothing sales proceeds to needy local organizations
- Safe Harbour, established in 1989 by Grace Church to provide a safe home for abused women
- Kinship, established in 2003 by Grace Church to provide family counseling and court-directed visits
- Habitat For Humanity fully-financed, hands-on project, "House of Grace" home completed in 2008

# THE VALUES OF GRACE CHURCH

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND SERVICE** - *by this we mean:*

- A welcoming and accepting spirit
- Respect for the dignity of every person
- Care and concern for the underserved that leads to action

## **MEANINGFUL WORSHIP** - *by this we mean:*

- A commitment to spirituality in our lives
- Provides a center and ground in our lives
- Provides a pathway to our relationship to God
- Is an opportunity to learn – together
- Scripture is taken seriously – not literally
- Love of Jesus brings us closer
- Music is an important dimension
- Open to innovative aspects to traditional worship

## **SENSE OF COMMUNITY** - *by this we mean:*

- Inclusivity
- Sense of family / family environment
- Caring
- Work together / play together
- Welcoming and friendly
- Opportunities for learning and fellowship

## **COMMITTED TO GOD’S KINGDOM** - *by this we mean:*

- On earth as it is in heaven
- Sharing God’s love with others
- Stewards of God’s gifts – sharing our time, talent and treasures
- Inviting others to learn, serve and share Christ’s love

## **GRACE** - *by this we mean:*

- We believe this is the spirit of God that operates in all creation
- We believe this spirit of God is characterized by mercy, justice, forgiveness and kindness
- Grace happens

**We believe that by exhibiting these values, the members of Grace Church demonstrate God’s love**

## Who We Are

Our parish consists of approximately 255 baptized members, categorized by age and years at Grace Church as follows:



Parishioners make up about 150 households. Of those, 41% live alone, and 47% are couples without children living with them. Of our members, 88% have been at Grace for over five years which speaks well for the Parish.

While most members live within ten miles, some drive over twenty-five miles to church. We offer three Eucharistic services weekly, 8:00 am and 10:00 am on Sunday and 5:00 pm midweek. Worship attendance varies with the season and has decreased somewhat over the last three years. In 2009, weekly attendance averaged 135, in 2008, 138, and in 2007, 145.

Grace is one of eighty-nine parishes in the Diocese of Ohio [www.dohio.org](http://www.dohio.org). We have always sent voting delegates to annual convention and representatives to as many other diocesan functions as we can. At last November's convention, one of our parishioners was proudly elected to serve a two-year term on Diocesan Council.



We have many opportunities outside worship to gather and socialize as a parish. Adults' Night Out at parishioners' homes is very popular as well as the parish picnic, pig roast, various Lenten suppers, breakfast after worship on Sunday, and women's theater outings. Groups of parishioners have been close friends for years and overlap memberships in service, social, philanthropic, and cultural organizations in the local community.

Despite strong ties among members, it is important to say that Grace has been concerned about dwindling membership and participation over recent years. In 2004, we hired outside consultants to guide us in an intentional "visioning" process of strengthening our church mission. Much was accomplished over the years since then, but we need to rekindle that fervor for new disciples. The Values of Grace Church, listed on the previous page, are statements compiled from all members during our visioning process. They portray most succinctly who we are as a parish community and our mission statement for which we strive.

## WHOM WE ARE CALLING

The qualities we seek in our next rector emanate from the interwoven values embraced by the parishioners of Grace Church. As addressed in our parish profile, these values and goals are to deepen and expand our faith and ministry, to invest in Christian formation of our youth, to build community outreach, and to engender faithful stewardship of time and talent. In order to help us meet the goals we have set, our new rector must be highly evolved spiritually, be a strong and passionate leader, a capable manager, and have excellent communication and interpersonal skills. We want our next rector and family, if applicable, to be active and involved members of the church community.

### **Spiritual Development and Worship Liturgy**

Our most pressing need is for a rector who will inspire us with meaningful sermons, teach us how to pray, encourage parish fellowship and hospitality, and promote faith development. As a deeply spiritual person, our next rector will possess an in-depth knowledge of, and a calling to share Christian theology, beliefs, and values, as well as an appreciation and respect for other spiritual traditions. A personal passion for spreading the Word will inspire by example. Our rector will be willing to provide thoughtful guidance and insightful commentary about the conflicts, doubts, and controversies that emerge as we attempt to live our faith.

Our congregation has expressed preferences on sermon style from traditional to non-traditional and from personal to intellectual. It is important that the sermon give meaning to scripture and its application in our daily lives. We seek creativity in selection of liturgy and music that will appeal to different audiences. The bottom-line is that we appreciate thought-provoking, relevant, and memorable sermons as a means of sparking reflection and promoting spiritual and congregational growth.

### **Christian Formation and Education**

The priest we call must have a commitment to our Sunday school and a vision of community for our youth in the life of the church, some of whom presently feel disenfranchised. Due to dwindling numbers of youth, it has been difficult to provide an inspiring youth program. Adult parishioners have enjoyed a renewal in spirituality by attending informative and thought-provoking classes ranging from "How to Pray" to "What it means to be an Episcopalian." These classes have been well-attended and uplifting to our parishioners during this interim period. We are counting on the continuation of these programs. Our new rector should be able to promote an interest in meaningful Christian education and recreation for our youth, teenagers, and young adults. Additionally, the rector should provide preparation for confirmation and teacher training. We are hopeful that our youth group can reactivate in the future.

### **Development of Ministry and Mission**

A candidate for Grace's rectorship should be compassionate, energetic, and possess a sense of humor. Our expectation is that pastoral care/counseling and programs for stewardship, church growth and development, and community outreach will also be directed and supported. Our new Rector should feel comfortable nurturing in times of need which includes bereavement, visiting parishioners who may be homebound, in the hospital or a nursing home. Identifying and training laity and delegating ministries are important skills. As a creative problem solver, our new Rector will effectively handle uncertainty, controversy, and conflict. The capacity to conduct a healthy and effective discourse in the face of expressed concerns is an important attribute. We want someone to share in our commitment to outreach by helping us maintain our already successful programs and encouraging our congregation to give freely of their time and talent.

## Church Administration and Growth

Grace Church is seeking a priest who has the ability to work in concert with the vestry to guide and manage the affairs of the parish. In cooperation with the vestry, the rector will authorize staff positions and terms of employment. Skills in parish strategic planning are important to reverse declining membership. We are now posting our newsletter on our website to reduce costs and participate in the "green" movement. During our principal Sunday Eucharist, we utilize Power Point slides to project the liturgy. A basic working knowledge of computer software is critical as much of our church business is conducted electronically.

### In Closing...

All of these desires add up to a large calling, but we do not expect perfection. The people of Grace Church are committed to sustaining their leader with understanding, volunteer support, feedback, and the love of Christ. Our role and responsibility as a community will be to provide an environment where our next rector's gifts can grow, expand, flourish, and ultimately complement our own.



Our next rector as drawn by our Sunday school children

## WHERE WE LIVE

Sandusky is uniquely located halfway between Toledo and Cleveland, which provides more “big city” amenities, such as cultural and sporting events, as well as major airports. Many Erie County residents have found that with easy access to the Ohio Turnpike and SR 2/I-90, traveling to these larger cities is fast and easy.

The county is served by six school districts. Sandusky City Schools has the highest enrollment in the area, with approximately 3800 children. There is also parochial and Montessori education available.

The manufacturing industry has experienced a downturn in Erie County in recent years. The largest year-round employer is Firelands Regional Medical Center. Additionally, Cedar Point provides a large number of temporary jobs during its summer operating season, as well as jobs related to the influx of visitors.

Data obtained in 2008 shows the current population in Sandusky to be 25,688, and in Erie County as a whole, to be approximately 77,000, with almost 89% being Caucasian and 9% African-American. The median household income is approximately \$48,000.



Sandusky boasts its own symphony, the Firelands Symphony Orchestra, which primarily performs at the historic Sandusky State Theater. The Theater also brings a variety of year-round entertainment to the Firelands area, including plays, musicals, comedians, and other events. In addition to the State Theater, other area theaters include the local Harlequins Theater, the oldest continuously running community theater in the state of Ohio, and the Huron Playhouse, Ohio’s oldest continuing summer theater. Erie County is also home to Firelands College of Bowling Green State University, and to the Ohio Veterans’ Home, a residence for more than 50,000 veterans since its inception. Other area attractions include beautiful parks, the Sandusky Maritime Museum, and the historic Merry-Go-Round Museum.



Sandusky is one of Ohio's most popular tourist destinations. This county seat sits on the shores of Sandusky Bay, and has easy access to Lake Erie and its islands. Kelleys Island, the largest of Ohio's Lake Erie islands, welcomes thousands of visitors each year with its blend of nature, history, and contemporary attractions. Middle Bass Island blends nature and serenity with spirited island fun. Put-in-Bay on South Bass Island has been attracting visitors for nearly 150 years, and is home to Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial. Sandusky is also home to Cedar Point, which features the largest collection of roller coasters in the world, as well as many current and former coaster record holders. The tourist influx produced by Cedar Point has drawn resort businesses and water parks to the area. Hundreds of thousands travel here each year to enjoy the wide variety of activities.



Sandusky is a great place to live and a great place to play! And, we have some of the most beautiful sunsets on the Great Lakes. For more information, please visit the following websites:

[www.ci.sandusky.oh.us](http://www.ci.sandusky.oh.us)

[www.sanduskyfunspots.com](http://www.sanduskyfunspots.com)

[www.cedarpoint.com](http://www.cedarpoint.com)

[www.shoresandislands.com](http://www.shoresandislands.com)

[www.erie-county-ohio.net](http://www.erie-county-ohio.net)

[www.travellakeerie.com](http://www.travellakeerie.com)

[www.firelands.com](http://www.firelands.com)

## What We Do with the Gifts We Are Given

### Ministries in Action

Grace Episcopal Church provides many ministries for involvement, both inside and outside the parish. By encouraging everyone's participation in church activities, we hope to recognize and respond to Christ's call and serve Him in our church.



Grace Church's acolytes, lay Eucharistic ministers, Eucharistic visitors, lectors, ushers/greeters, power point liturgy projectionists, music director and choir, and our newly formed prayer leadership group give wonderful service to our parish family. The acolyte ministry has grown and is now multi-generational. The cadre of lectors and Eucharistic ministers likewise has grown, and new servers are prayerful and dedicated. The choir and altar guild continue to bring beauty to our services. Our Eucharistic visitors have regularly scheduled visits to two nursing homes as well as administering communion to our absent saints who are hospitalized or homebound.



Our Christian education for youth program is presently using a team approach for Sunday school, which our interim priest recently introduced, using an Episcopalian course of study.

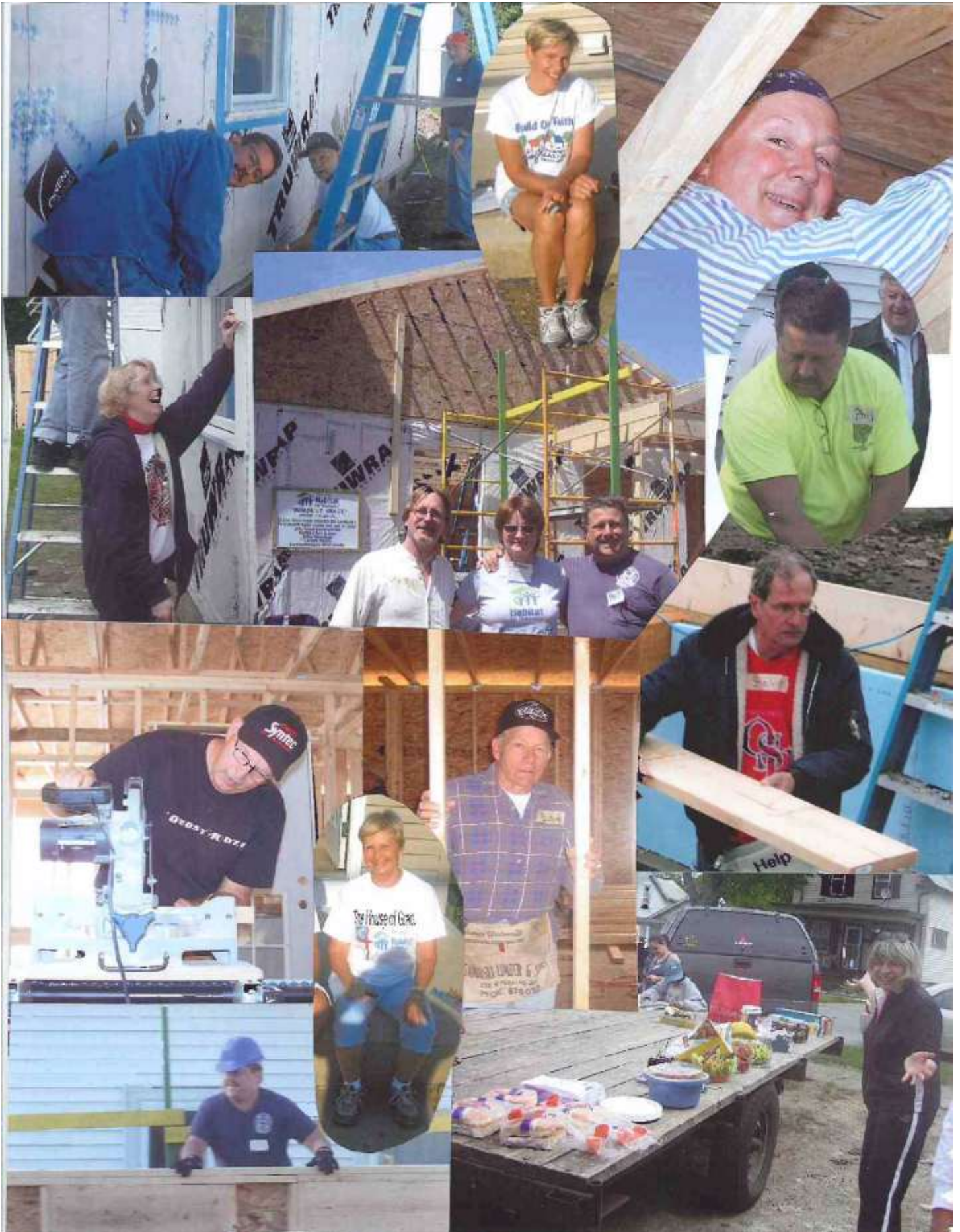
We are fortunate to have a health and wellness ministry at Grace. First Congregational Church and Firelands Regional Medical Center are Grace's partners for all-age health promotion and disease prevention. Water-based and land-based exercise classes are led by a retired physician. These classes are open to members of both parishes five days a week throughout the year. Our parish nurse works in conjunction with Firelands Regional Medical Center and our health and wellness director to provide health and wellness programs related to the needs of our congregation. She also does weekly blood pressures and assists with an annual health fair at Grace. Our parishioners are presently participating in a program called "Walk to Jerusalem". It is an opportunity to increase our physical exercise and maintain good health while learning more about our Christian faith.



The pastoral care ministry carries out the mission of Grace by serving those who have physical, emotional, spiritual, and pastoral needs. These dedicated parishioners seek to assist and support our own members in times of personal or family difficulty. This is accomplished through the flower ministry and the newly formed transportation ministry. Monthly, cards of sympathy, congratulations, appreciation, and encouragement are sent to our own parishioners as well as to those serving in the military. God's love and comfort is evident in the beautiful prayer and bridal shawls, lap blankets, and baby blankets that are lovingly knitted throughout the year by the Knit Wits' ministry.



The above mentioned ministries are a testimony to the solid core of dedicated parishioners who strive to meet the needs of our congregation through God's continual love and guidance.



## Outreach

The largest and most hands-on project in recent years was the building of our Habitat for Humanity “House of Grace” in 2008. Grace Church not only provided 100% of the funds (\$65,000) for the house, but more importantly, 50 of our members physically worked on site and provided lunches, break food, and prayers during construction. In 2010-2011, we hope to be one of several area churches building a “Disciple Build” Habitat House together.



In August of 2009, we began a new community meal program outside in Washington Park adjacent to the church. At Free Frankfurter Fridays, parish volunteers grilled hotdogs, and offered chips, drinks, and watermelon to anyone wanting a meal. This was scheduled every Friday until mid-October and was very well-attended for our first foray into community meals. In October, we transitioned to a monthly community hot dinner in our parish hall. The number of people who are coming has grown with each dinner. Community meals were an established outreach in our now-closed sister parish of Calvary, whose members faithfully continue the ministry as members at Grace.

Additionally, the outreach committee designates a focus mission for each month. These monthly projects have included collecting supplies for needy school children, a family counseling service, prison ministry, a food pantry, and care packages for military overseas. During Lent, 2010, the Heifer Project is again our designated parish mission, and our goal is to donate an “ark of animals” with a \$5000 gift. We also had two successful blood drives for Red Cross. Yearly, we have provided and served a meal at the Volunteers of America homeless shelter, Crossroads.

In the past, Grace has accomplished great mission work in our local community. We established Sandusky’s first hospital in the late 1800’s, which is now Firelands Regional Medical Center. Sixty years ago the ECW of Grace organized the Thrift Shop, a consignment shop, which continues today, donating its profits to local needs. Grace also established Kinship, a place where families can meet for counseling and court-directed visits, and Safe Harbour, a safe home for abused women. These are tough acts to follow.

The outreach committee meets monthly to review the needs of local, as well as world relief agencies. Our challenge at Grace is to introduce more parishioners to the giving of time and talent for outreach as well as being good stewards of our outreach-designated funds. As much as we do, there is still such an opportunity to do more.

## Education at Grace Church

Christian education for our youngsters is offered during the 10:00 service. The multi-age curriculum is organized in themes incorporating the lectionary. Each week the children join the congregation for Eucharist. On the last Sunday of the month, the children become a key part of the 10:00 service, processing into the sanctuary, sitting with the Choir, reading the prayers of the people they have written for that month, bringing forth the gifts to the Eucharistic table, and standing with the clergy during the consecration.



During this interim period, many adult education classes have been offered and well-attended. We explore a wide range of topics including how to pray, Episcopalian theology, new methods for evangelism, and Lenten study. Many parishioners would like the church to continue offering varied educational opportunities.

Our perennial challenge is to spark interest from our teenagers and young adults with meaningful education and Christian formation. We currently do not have an active youth or young adult group. It is imperative that our next rector engage and relate well to our younger members.



Grace Church Youth Group, New York City Trip

## Grace's Musical Notes

During the early part of the last century, the main choir of Grace Church was composed of only men and boys. The boys were often paid a small amount and were expected to perform at regular church services in a very professional manner. Many fine soloists evolved from this early training.

Music, as part of the church service, is taken seriously at Grace and is well-chosen to further enhance and match the lessons and gospels as closely as possible. In the sanctuary, Grace has two very fine pipe organs and a grand piano, and this space is available to the community to bring in many professional music ensembles. The chapel has an electronic organ and is used for smaller groups.

Our present organist/choir master is Randall A. Ruthsatz. Randy graduated with a B.A. from Heidelberg College and majored in business and music. He has been recommended for membership in the Association of Anglican Musicians, and is an affiliate of the Royal School of Church Music. Randy is a member of the Sandusky Chapter of American Guild of Organists. Randy has worked well with all of the rectors and inspires the best from his choir members. The present choir is small and is always on the lookout for new members. The members like to be challenged and are sincere in their obligation to perform all music to the glory of God.



## Financial Strength

Grace has been blessed over its long history with parishioners who truly understood sacrificial giving. We have also been blessed with parishioners who have been good stewards of these endowed gifts. Our invested endowment balance as of December 31, 2009 stood at just under \$3 million, despite unprecedented market losses for the period September, 2008 through March, 2009.

What is more important, however, is what we do with those funds. The Grace Church finance committee recommended over ten years ago that we utilize a spending formula. This cash flow calculation allows our endowment to continue to grow while dedicating up to 5% of the five-year average endowment balance to mission and outreach. In 2010 our Endowment Outreach Fund will approximate \$95,000 due to the spending formula. The Outreach Fund is immediately available for disbursement to various mission projects and agencies upon approval by the vestry. Grace also collects all Easter and Christmas offerings for another outreach fund, the use of which augments that from endowment.

In addition to cash flows from the Grace Church endowment, we also derive income to cover internal church mission (operations) from beneficial interests in outside trusts. For the year 2009 we received \$52,220, and for 2008, we received \$86,991 from these sources.

Unfortunately, member giving has been trending downward for the last five years. While we generally collect what was budgeted, the number of pledgers has decreased as well as the average amount pledged. Our challenge every year is to stimulate parishioners toward sacrificial giving with prayer.

#### Pledge Statistics

	<u>For 2010</u>	<u>For 2009</u>	<u>For 2008</u>
Total \$	\$126,300	\$188,500	\$213,600
Pledging Members	104	132	141
Average \$	\$1,214	\$1,428	\$1,515

Operating expenses of the parish are budgeted annually based on input to the finance committee from the various ministry committees. Our total operating budget for 2010 is \$288,000, up 6.6% from 2009 operating expenses of \$270,000 and down 14% from 2008 operating expenses of \$335,000. Operating expenses for 2007 and 2006 were \$306,600 and \$316,250 respectively. Most of these variances revolve around clergy and support staff changes and estimated rector search expenses in 2010. Grace currently pays four employees, the interim rector, parish secretary, sexton, and choir director/organist, and pays professional fees to an outside CPA-licensed treasurer and an assistant treasurer.

#### Comparative Breakdown of Expenses

	<u>For 2010 (Budget)</u>		<u>For 2009 (Actual)</u>		<u>For 2008 (Actual)</u>	
Salaries & Benefits	\$177,300	61.2%	\$186,742	66.8%	\$235,404	70.1%
Church Facilities	\$ 61,000	21.1%	\$ 56,460	20.2%	\$ 58,291	17.4%
Church Office	\$ 13,000	4.5%	\$ 15,673	5.6%	\$ 8,672	2.6%
Grace Ministries	\$ 38,300	13.2%	\$ 20,781	7.4%	\$ 33,130	9.9%
<b>TOT. OPER. EXP.</b>	<b>\$289,600</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$279,656</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$335,497</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Our financial position is very solid due to the generosity of those parishioners who went before us and the prudent stewardship of parishioners who came after them. We must strive to devote more of our time and talent to share our gifts in the community and the world to fulfill our mission statement. Grace Church has been in the forefront of community outreach in its 175 years in Sandusky, and it is our prayerful mission to continue in that path with new vision and energy.

## A Taste of Grace Church History

On March 15, 1835, two Episcopalians, Rhoda Camp and her brother Zenas Barker, a few dissident Congregationalists, and several Masons met at the home of a Unitarian (Oran Follett) to organize an “Episcopal Church and Society”. Mrs. Camp had owned a pew in St. Paul’s Church, Buffalo, which she sold to help finance Grace Church. A small stone building was built on public ground with stone quarried across the street. The cornerstone was laid July 28, 1835 by two priests, one from Buffalo and one from Norwalk, but no bishop. Grace flourished during the years, and many changes were made in the structure. Of all the many churches built in Sandusky’s younger days, Grace alone is still standing on its original site.

During the rectorship of Dr. Sherlock Bronson (1850-1866), who left the presidency of Kenyon College to come to Grace, the building was enlarged with transepts and two towers. The parish grew to include two missions, on the east and west sides of the city, with chapels and church schools. The following rector, the Rev. W. W. Farr (1866-1877), added a mission on the south side and began a tradition of social services to the community by promoting the founding of Good Samaritan Hospital which, today, is known as Firelands Regional Medical Center.

Grace’s loyal parishioners have always been very active in the welfare of the community and in some cases were involved in the country’s politics. The Civil War was largely financed through the efforts of Jay Cooke (a prominent, early member of Grace) who was considered the Napoleon of Civil War Finance. He was a deeply religious man and is quoted as saying in regard to his success, “We were God-chosen. I have always thought we were helped and sustained by His gracious power.”

In 1893, a (Lang) Johnson Tracker Organ was installed in Grace, and the old organ was given to Calvary Church which is still in use. On Easter of 2004, our sister church, Calvary, a mission from Grace Church, closed its door after almost one hundred years of faithful ministry. We have welcomed Calvary parishioners into our midst as we also welcome all people seeking a church family.

## Grace Church Facilities

Grace church traces its roots from 1835 in a small stone building to the Romanesque Revival style church we worship in today. From those humble beginnings we were proud to be recognized on October 20, 1982, when the church was added to the U.S. National Register of Historical Places.



Over the past 175 years, the building, situated adjacent to Sandusky's beautiful Washington Park, has undergone many renovations to accommodate a flourishing congregation, such as the addition of classrooms, a chapel, and a parish hall. The most recent renovations, new handicapped entryways, an elevator, an air-conditioning system, and staff offices, were completed in the early 1990's.

In 2009, three new desktop computers, two laptop computers, a new color copier/printer and a wireless internet system were purchased. In the main sanctuary an updated wireless audio system, complete with hearing assist devices for the hearing-impaired was installed. A new projector is utilized to project Power Point slides of the liturgy for worship services.



The main sanctuary has two organs and a Kawai six-foot grand piano. The chancel organ, a Johnson & Son Opus 798, was installed in 1893. This 3,146-pipe instrument was rebuilt from 1977 to 1979 enlarging it to provide complete choruses of sound in each division. The 721-pipe gallery organ was finished in 1987 to provide support and encouragement of congregational singing. Although an independent organ, it is intended to complement the chancel organ.



Also, adorning our sanctuary are the stained glass windows given by parishioners through the years. Of particular beauty is the “Sermon on the Mount” window over the altar and the “Ascension” window on the west wall. These and all other stained glass windows have recently been removed, cleaned and reinstalled with extra reinforcements by the Poremba Stained Glass Studio in Cleveland, Ohio.



Our chapel is used for early Sunday morning and mid-week services as well as for other small services and ceremonies. The chapel has a two-manual Allen electronic organ added in 1976 and a 128-niche columbarium.



The Mary Simpson Room in the church's undercroft is a multi-purpose room. Complete with a full kitchen this facility is host to many church dinners, activities, and functions.



We are grateful and blessed by those whom have gone before us having left us such a fine facility in which to praise and worship God. Recognizing this, we are dedicated to maintaining and improving our beautiful church for generations to come.