

Closing words

As you have read about the new vision at Grace for the coming years, I hope you will see this as a positive opportunity for Grace to be the Church of Christ at this time and place. There are a lot of things that are changing around us in society and the church. The one thing that remains is the love of God that we encounter in the person of Christ.

I invite you to join me and the leadership at Grace to continue to proclaim and live out the good news we have in Christ.

Ministry Phrase:

*Sharing Christ so all will know...
...the forgiveness, love and grace of God!*



A Vision for Grace



Grace United Church 2018

A Vision for Grace



The History of Grace Visions

Throughout the last 25 years at Grace Church, we have moved through a variety of visions that helped us to grow and strengthen the Ministry of Christ at Grace. The purpose of these visions was to help us focus our energy to move in a way we believed God was calling us toward. Each of the previous visions were affirmed and supported by the membership of the congregation. I have no doubt it was due to the visions of the past that God has blessed our congregation and we encounter the strength that we currently enjoy at this moment.

The challenge now is to move forward with a new vision. Visions are always difficult to embrace because they take us into an area of our lives and our church that feels uncomfortable. It involves moving in directions we never encountered in the past. We are moving in these new directions simply because we live in a world that is very different than the world of the previous 25 years.

I would ask you to read this vision document and to be open and listen for the Spirit of God moving through you. There will be opportunities to ask questions and gain new insight as we move into the visioning process in the month of October.

I want to thank you for being a member of Grace Church and I look forward to working with you in this new vision and to being amazed by the way God will take this vision and transform our congregation into a stronger place of witness and faith for the people within our community.

Grace Visions

- 1996-1999 Operation Lift off
- 2000-2003 Growing with Grace
- 2003-2006 Continuing to Grow with Grace
- 2006-2009 Maintaining the Momentum
- 2009-2013 Making a Difference for Christ Near and Far
- 2014-2018 Beyond Our Limits Beyond Our Walls

THIS I BELIEVE

I believe that:

- * The strength of ministry within a congregation is dependent upon the Holy Spirit and the faith of individual congregational members
- * God has some positive plans for Grace church as we prepare to commit to greater discipleship and faith
- * There are many opportunities for strengthening our congregation in the future
- * God is sifting the United Church at this time to determine which congregations will continue to be a light within the community and those whose light will fade
- * Grace church has the resources, personnel and vision to move forward in a healthy and positive way
- * Discipleship in the future will challenge us to move into new and exciting areas of faith that will both bless us and stretch us from what we have known in the past
- * Grace church has people of deep faith who want to be an active congregation for Christ in the near and distant future
- * God has a plan for our congregation within the next 3 to 5 years as we continue to trust in God's presence



John C. Maxwell

The Logo Description

The logo for our vision is a creative design of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit of God that provides the life and energy of the Church today. Jesus promised that when he ascended into heaven, he would send the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen the church. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit that is essential in the lives of each Christian and helps us to continue to live out our lives in faith for Christ.

The various colours on the graphic represent the colours of the church year.

Red is the colour of the Holy Spirit and reminds us of Pentecost and the day the Holy Spirit descended upon the lives of the disciples.

Green is the colour of growth and represents the importance of each Christian intentionally making an effort to continue to grow in faith becoming more like Christ.

Blue is the colour of the season of Advent and reminds us of the birth of Christ, that moment in history where God entered into human form and became for all people "Emmanuel".

Purple is the colour of the season of Lent. Lent is a time in the year when we reflect upon our humanness and the times when we have fallen short of our ability to be like Christ. The purpose of Lent is not to put ourselves down but to allow ourselves to experience the grace and forgiveness that comes from Christ and then commit ourselves once again to living out our lives for him.

The number **167** is an interesting part of our logo. It is a reminder that we are called to live out our Christian faith the other one hundred and sixty-seven hours of the week. Worship is the time when we focus on our faith. The **167** encourages us to be more intentional in praying, reading the Scriptures, and reaching out to others for Christ.



The New Vision

The vision for the next 5 years is entitled "**Engaging the Community**". The reality of our time is that there is a significant indifference within the community to the Ministry of the church. Many people within the community do not understand the positive aspects of a relationship with Christ. There are a couple of reasons for this. Firstly, in times of relative wealth and ease, people turn away from the Christian faith in the belief that they are the masters of their own fate. People today believe they do not need the Christian faith because they are quite self-sufficient. Secondly, the church, for the past several decades, has not been engaging people in conversation about the Christian faith. We have been a church that simply waits for people to come and then hope that they will stay. This is an attitude that will be important to change.

"The overall goal of the new vision is to strengthen the congregation of Grace"

The overall goal of this new vision is to strengthen the congregation of Grace and encourage more individuals to take part in the Ministry of Christ to the community and world. This will be accomplished as we begin to learn how to live out our faith in a more practical and intentional way. It will involve engaging people within the community in relevant spiritual conversations in very comfortable and casual settings. It is a positive form of sharing our faith so others might understand and come to know the person of Christ. Through our conversations and personal stories hopefully individuals will be drawn into the community of faith at Grace.

This will be an interesting and challenging experience for many individuals within Grace church. The reason being is we, as

The new vision "**Engaging the Community**" is a vision that will encourage each member of the congregation at Grace to be more proactive in talking about our belief in Christ to family, friends and neighbours. To accomplish this it will be important for us to:

- Know and be able to articulate the Christian story
- affirm our personal life story
- discover how the Christian story and our personal life story intersect
- Become more comfortable in sharing our story with family and friends in a casual manner

members of the United Church, have been expressing our faith in tangible ways by the ministries and the things we do. We think people will understand the reason we serve the community and the world is because of our faith in Christ - this is one of the illusions we have been holding for the past four decades. The United Church has made a significant impact upon the community and the world. The difference today however, is that people think we are doing this simply because we care about others in need. While this is true, it is not the only reason we serve. We serve the poor and the people who are in need within both our community and the world primarily because we believe in Jesus Christ. In responding to his call, we are motivated

"A church is not gauged by the size of its building or numbers, but by the broadness of its vision and the height of its dreams."

Anonymous

to live out our lives caring for others as his servants. It is our faith that leads us into a consistent and ongoing ministry. This is obvious to us as members of the congregation but is not obvious to the people within the community. God has given us an opportunity, at this place and time, to be more intentional in articulating our faith and sharing that faith with others.

This vision will also have a positive impact upon members of our congregation. It will help strengthen the faith of each person and will give us increased confidence and knowledge of the Christian faith and deepen our experience of the living Christ. This will broaden the ministry and the opportunities that God will give us to help spread the good news of Christ.

Vision Process

The new vision for Grace is something that the Board would like all members to know about and support. Having a strong vision for the future of our congregation will help us in many ways:

- 1) Provide a sense of direction and focus for the Ministry of Christ in the coming years
- 2) Help all the members of the congregation work together for a common goal
- 3) Bring a sense of enthusiasm, joy and hope to our membership
- 4) Assure members that we have a strong plan for the future of our congregation.

For a vision to be implemented, it will require the affirmation of the majority of the membership at Grace. This will be accomplished through a series of house meetings where members can learn more about the specifics of the vision and ask questions that may be of concern.

Vision Outline

- The Board has been working on the vision throughout the 2017-2018 Board meetings
- Vision direction to be approved by the Board of Management in August 2018
- Communicating the vision process in September
- Casting the vision within the congregation
- 15-20 House Meetings in the month of October
- Distribution of the Vision Packages in October at the house meetings
- Distribution of the Vision Packages to members unable to attend house meetings
- Congregational response through the use of Vision Cards.
- Collection of the Vision Cards
- Adoption of the Vision with a 2/3 majority of Vision Cards returned
- Confirmation of the Vision at the 2019 Annual General Meeting in February

Renovation/Upgrade

It has been over 18 years since we have done anything significant with respect to upgrading the facilities at Grace. In the year 2000, Grace United church went under a major renovation and addition project. When the renovations were completed, we enjoyed a beautiful, fresh new building that has enabled us to expand the ministry of Christ at Grace through the years. God has indeed blessed the ministry of Christ at Grace since the renovations took place and Grace Church is a much healthier and active congregation than has been in the past.

As a result of our ongoing ministry, the church facilities now are beginning to look tired. The paint on the walls of the entrance and in the stairwells show signs of wear and usage; the carpets are now worn and dirty from the thousands of steps of people coming and going within our building - by and large our building now looks weary and worn.

Part of the new vision will be to freshen up the interior of our building and help it to become more functional for expanding ministry within the next 3 to 5 years. This will involve some major upgrades and renovations.

The renovation/upgrade project could include:

- Renewing the flooring in the whole sanctuary, including at the front entrance.
- Improved lighting in the narthex.
- Possible removal of the sanctuary wall between the narthex and the inside of the church to create a more welcoming entrance and fellowship/reception area. This would also remove the bottleneck entering the sanctuary.
- Improve stage lighting for the front of the church.
- Replacing the current pews with comfortable individual movable seating for greater flexibility in worship and other events.

A renovation/upgrade initiative would help to make our church more inviting and build some enthusiasm and excitement within our congregation. It would send a clear and positive message to everyone that Grace Church fully intends to be a strong ministry over the next 5 to 10 years.

Ongoing Outreach Ministries

Throughout the world

- * *Mission and Service Fund*
- * *Honduras Build*

Within the Peterborough Community

- * *Ministry of Compassion*
- * *Collective Kitchens*
- * *One Roof Diner*
- * *5th Sunday Matters*

A Member's Perspective

As a long-term member of Grace church and a Board member, I have looked back over our vision statements over the years and marvel at how God has worked within our Grace family. I am excited and look forward to this new vision with which God has blessed us. **"Engaging The Community"**. I encourage all members, all ages to embrace this vision. Let us all ask and pray, "What does God want me to do?" We are called to serve not only those in our church, but all people including our neighbourhood and community. Each and every one of us has been blessed with varied giftedness. I am confident that by using our gifts and resources, we will answer God's call to make disciples for Christ. I know this vision will be a challenge but I also am confident that with God's direction and help, our Grace family, young and old will adapt and change to reflect the new vision. Loving Christ and loving each other will help us to reach out in love to those around us. Let us all look forward to **"Engaging The Community."**



Marilyn Coward

"The only thing worse than being blind is having sight and no vision."

Helen Keller

Debt Retirement

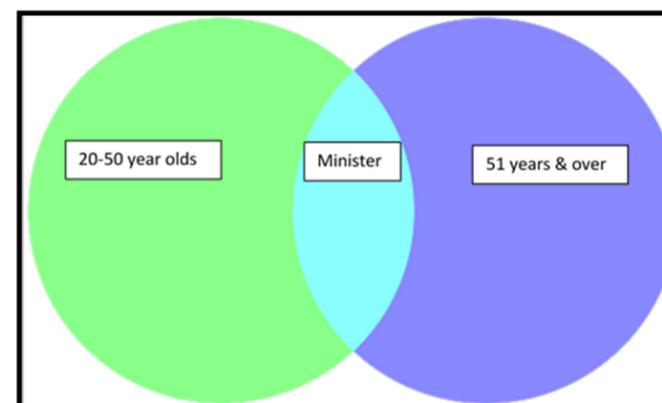
Connected with the new vision upgrade and renovations will be launching a debt retirement program. The objective of this program will be to retire the outstanding debt from 2017 and place us in a positive direction to begin new ministry initiatives that will strengthen our congregation in the future. The total debt reduction will be \$50,000 and the renovation/upgrade program will be \$130,000. It may be possible to secure a loan from the Church Extension Council of Shining Waters Presbytery. [Possibly in the range of \$30-\$40,000] The congregation would pledge the balance of the funds over a two to three-year period.

The possibilities for renewal, grow, strength and new possibilities lie, not in the past, but in the future into which God is calling us to go. Will Grace Church people continue to respond positively to that call and be one of Christ's faithful congregations?

Ministry Management

Ministry Circles

The Ministry of Christ will be managed through two intersecting circles.



The first circle will consist of individuals who will engage in ministry with the 20 to 50 -year-old members of the congregation. This ministry circle will be responsible to engage, communicate information, and provide programming that is helpful and supportive of people within this age group. This ministry circle will be guided by a paid accountable individual who is familiar with the Millennial's and Generation X's and is able to use communication models that will

easily connect with this generation. The key leader of this ministry circle will work in conjunction with the Minister of the congregation for oversight and support.

The second circle will consist of individuals who will be responsible for ministry, program and care for individuals within our congregation who are 51 years and older. This ministry circle will be largely volunteer and will have the support of the Minister and other staff members.

Both ministry groups will work in conjunction with the minister and be responsible to the Board of Management within the congregation of Grace.

Congregational Meeting Process

During the month of October, the goal will be to hold 15 to 20 meetings within the congregation membership. These meetings will be held within the homes of several members of Grace Church. The purpose of the meeting will be to invite members to come for conversation, fellowship and to be able to listen to and understand the vision that will be unfolding within the congregation beginning in April of 2019.

Each meeting will have a "host" who will help to set up and provide refreshments for those who come. The meetings will be conducted by myself and one or two other members of the Board who will present the material and respond to any questions or concerns. An information booklet will be presented to each person who comes so that they can continue to digest the scope and the importance of our new vision.

"What people pray for will tell you more than anything else whether they are locked into the vision and priorities of the church."

Andy Stanley

Enhancing Lay Ministry

The greatest challenge in this new vision will be adjusting the mindset of the current membership. Throughout the history of the United Church the ordered Minister often fulfilled the major ministry portion of any congregation. Members of the congregation were seen as individuals who helped facilitate that ministry and the clergy person. In the traditional model, the minister was responsible for all worship services; communion; visitation within the hospitals and nursing homes; conducting funerals and weddings etc. This new part of the vision changes traditional view of ministry in very significant ways.

As we move into the future, one of the goals will be to resource the members of Grace Church. This would mean taking time to teach the general membership of the congregation how they can become ministers within Grace church and respond to the needs of the people in the community around us. This objective will be accomplished by:

- 1) Helping individual members of Grace to gain the confidence to engage their family and friends in positive ways of faith. It will help them to be a spiritual resource; from general conversations about faith, to be a spiritual presence in times of uncertainty, challenge, sickness and pain. Members will learn how to share their faith, respond to questions, and pray with family members and friends in times of transition and in moments of pain such as in hospital visits and times of loss.
- 2) Providing greater breadth of ministry at Grace as the entire membership take on an active part in the ministry of Christ within the community.
- 3) Providing a witness to the practical application of the Christian faith and its relevance in day-to-day life. People see how a strong faith can assist us in day-to-day living not by what the Minister says or does but how the people within our congregation live out their faith.

“The greatest challenge in this new vision will be adjusting the mindset of the current membership”

YEAR 1: PREPARING OURSELVES

- Clarify and confirm the theology of the membership of Grace church
- Begin to teach and help people within the congregation know the biblical story
- Read and study 50 of the major stories in the Bible
- Begin to talk about our faith journeys with others in the congregation and write our own personal stories of faith
- Understand and be able to have conversation about our faith and relationship with Christ
- Discover how our personal faith story and the Christian story intersect
- Teach about prayer both personal and public
- Develop a prayer resource booklet
- Train members in the congregation on effective communication skills
- Help the people of Grace understand that the greatest mission field now is within our own community. [The Christian faith in Honduras and in Third World countries is often stronger and more deeply embedded in the hearts and minds of the people than individuals in Canada]
- If the church is going to grow in the next 5 to 15 years, it will be through discovering positive ways to engage the community and share our Christian faith in healthy ways.

YEAR 2: PREPARING OUR CHURCH

- Begin to prepare the congregation to receive new members from the community. What needs to happen to be a more welcoming place? How do we make space for new individuals within our personal lives? How do we become more confident in the presence of strangers and other individuals who are different than ourselves?
- Develop and teach outreach or evangelistic principles and attitudes that will help support the members of Grace engaging others in our community.
- Adjust the budget to accurately reflect the need for mission work within our community.
- Develop two sermon series: One in the fall and one in the winter to inform the members of Grace of the significance of engaging the community and how we might begin to make it a reality within our congregation.
- Develop and implement a refurbishing plan for our congregation. This will include re-flooring the sanctuary, lighting of the sanctuary etc.
- Begin to re-furbish the sanctuary and rooms within the church

YEAR 3 - 5: MOVING INTO THE COMMUNITY

- Continue to strengthen the faith of Grace members and engage the community in healthy and positive strategies
- Problem solve any issues or concerns from people's day-to-day experience of faith living
- Incorporate outreach strategies to develop friendship within the community