



Area of Rochester:

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# 2020

## GRACE ROAD: A YEAR IN REVIEW

2020, A Year in Review



# GRATEFUL GRATEFUL GRATEFUL

**2020** was a year like no other. While it felt like the world stopped on a dime in March of 2020, we saw the church of God rise up, right here in Rochester. Grace Road was able to shine the light of Christ and push back darkness in various ways throughout the year, most of them invisible to the majority of the church.

We hope this annual report will encourage you to see where your giving went during a historic, and as so many infamously say, “unprecedented” year. God was certainly not distant, not absent, and not removed. We encourage you just as the writer of Hebrews encouraged the early church:

As we step over the threshold into a new year, we know we can face whatever comes our way only by the grace of God. He met us in our weakness and weariness in 2020. He will no doubt do the same in 2021. We are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken – not by a pandemic, politics, or divisions. We look to the year ahead with joy as we celebrate all of the ways our God was faithful to us in the year past.

***“ Therefore let us be **grateful** for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable **worship**, with reverence and awe, for our God is a **consuming fire.** ”***

– HEBREWS 12:28-29

# BENEVOLENCE:

**T**his year, we saw our church step up in multiple ways to serve the community and our own church family during COVID. While many in our church lost jobs and faced financial struggles, we were able to help 50 families at Grace Road stay on their feet. In addition, so many in our church donated money, food, and other various items to mercy ministries both at Grace Road and in the greater Rochester area.

**“...IT WAS A COMFORT KNOWING THE CHURCH WAS THERE IF I COULDN'T MAKE ENDS MEET. I AM SO GRATEFUL FOR THE CARE...”**

“When church stopped meeting in person, I received regular check in phone calls and texts from the staff and pastors at church. After letting them know that I was laid off due to Covid, the church proactively sent me a Wegmans gift card and an email offering more financial assistance. I thankfully didn't end up needing it, but it was a comfort knowing the church was there if I couldn't make ends meet. I am so grateful for the care and support I received this year from Grace Road.”

– NM

“I just wish to thank the Grace Road family for your support through these challenging times, especially over 2020. I wish to thank you for the financial support that you and the Grace Road Family have blessed me with. I found your concern a gift from God because of how the initial steps of your financial gift were implemented, not by my actions, but through your concern for my situation. You reached out to me to see how I was doing, that is true Christian love. If all truth be told, my pride would have never allowed me to ask for assistance, so THANK YOU ALL...”

I would like to send out a special thank you to all who reached out and contacted me with love and concern for my well being. May the Lord Jesus Christ continue to guide and bless Grace Road and our families. Thank you again. God Bless ”

– MR

Because of your generosity, Grace Road was able to send funds, coffee, meals, and medical supplies to the following organizations: Greece Food Pantry, 441 Food Pantry, Rochester Family Mission Food Pantry, 441 Ministries, Strong Memorial Hospital, Rochester General Hospital, Cameron Ministries, Loop Ministries, Food Link, Iberro, Green Angels.



*"REWIND HAS GIVEN ME A CHANCE TO HAVE SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO WHILE MUCH OF MY USUAL ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN CANCELLED. I'VE BEEN ABLE TO SEE MY FRIENDS AND BE IN THE BIBLE EVERY WEEK AND THAT HAS BEEN A BLESSING TO ME." - LAURYN BEYER*

In January of 2020, we had our first Snow Camp Retreat which was a great way to start the year. Despite the pandemic, our students continued to meet in various ways. Our students met in person from January through March, and then hopped on Zoom until June. Throughout the summer we saw students meet at different venues to study books, play sports, and gather around campfires with their own small groups. We had about 50 students involved in our summer groups.

**13 MILLION**  
AWKWARD MOMENTS  
OF SILENCE ON ZOOM

**02 BOOKS**  
COLOSSIANS & GALATIANS  
COVERED IN 2020

**X** ENOUGH TIMES TO BE REMINDED  
THAT YOUTH MINISTRY MATTERS  
**# OF TIMES A STUDENT...**  
ASKED WHEN WE'D BE MEETING  
IN PERSON AGAIN

From September through December, we were able to reconvene at Grace Road in person. This year our Rewind Leaders stepped up through small group Zoom calls and gatherings in the summer, which created space for students to continue to connect and build their faith. We saw parents and students work together to stay committed to student ministry in a really hard year – something that we know will make a lasting impact. We look forward to more gospel, community, and mission in 2021!

*"REWIND WAS A BLESSING DURING 2020 BECAUSE EVEN THOUGH IT WAS A TOUGH YEAR, REWIND ALLOWED US TO GET TOGETHER WITH PEOPLE OUR AGE AND DIVE INTO GOD'S WORD. I LEARNED THAT EVEN IF THINGS ARE OUT OF CONTROL, GOD ALWAYS HAS A PLAN." - JOSEPH GARCIA*

## GKIDS & VOLUNTEERS

**157**  
GKIDS VOLUNTEERS (FOR OUR REOPENING IN 2020)

**185**  
GKIDS VOLUNTEERS (SINCE JANUARY 2020)

**448**  
GKIDS PARTICIPANTS (IN 2020)

GKids continued to make Jesus big in 2020! Our GKids classes met over Zoom each Sunday from the end of May through August. We saw different volunteers step up to bring joy to kids' faces every week as we learned about Obadiah all the way up to Acts.

When we reopened, we saw 157 volunteers show up to serve, and since then 185 people have served in GKids since January of 2020. We had 448 kids come through GKids, and know that there was about that many kids bouncing on couches at home this year too. We are thankful for the Lord's faithfulness to the littlest ones in our church this year!



# COMMUNITY

## GRACE GROUPS:

This last year has been an incredible adventure for our Grace Group community. As meeting together became more and more difficult, the desire and need for community continued to expand. As a church, we had to become even more creative with how we met and stayed connected. What started off as groups meeting outdoors gathered around a television for Sunday morning services, quickly changed into encouraging times of fellowship around campfires, then video calls and text updates to check-in.

We were reminded that community is not about a single evening gathering but a Gospel-centered call for all of us to meet one another's needs and be in prayer. This year reminds us that God is always good even when we don't see Him working. As our nearly 50 groups consisting of almost 600 members look towards meeting in-person again, we will take the lessons we have learned and trust further in the work God is doing.

## GROW GROUPS:

While 2020 looked like nothing anyone imagined, we saw our Grow Groups, these small epicenters of men and women who were committed to studying God's word, continue to meet and persist against all odds. Groups continued to meet over Zoom, studied God's word week to week without fail, and even prayed with one another over screens or backyard fires as we all carried one another's burdens in a strange year.

When it seemed like everyone wanted a break, some of our Grow Groups even continued throughout the summer as a way to keep ties with the church community and the body of Christ. We look ahead to a new year of deeper study, deeper friendships, and deeper growth as disciples.



# LOCAL MISSIONS

## TESTIMONY

*WE ALSO SAW GOD CONNECT MULTIPLE CHRISTIAN VOLUNTEERS WITH NEWLY ARRIVED REFUGEE FAMILIES THROUGH OUR NEW NEIGHBOR PROGRAM.*

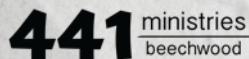
Refuge Rochester empowers the Church of Rochester to welcome and embrace refugees in our city as a way of welcoming Jesus (Matt. 25:35). A highlight for 2020 was our Seeking Justice conference in January with speaker/author Gena Thomas. The challenges of 2020 opened up opportunities for the Church to care for the needs of vulnerable refugees and immigrants in our community. Thanks to the generosity of multiple churches in Rochester, including Grace Road, Refuge Rochester was able to provide over \$12,000.00 worth of grocery gift cards to over 80 refugee and immigrant families across our community.

In March 2020, we welcomed Grace Road member Tiffany Wood as our Director of Operations. Tiffany has raised the quality of everything we do, and has played a key role in facilitating our training of volunteers, developing our online presence and establishing administrative systems for our organization. We're grateful that God led her to this work, and for Grace Road's connection to our team through her.

### Local Missions

Open Door Mission / Cameron Community / Refugee Roc / Zach Hanje - CRU (3 campuses) / Flower City / Youth for Christ / 441 Ministries / Jill Meacham Cru / Molly Tolbert Cru / John Wellington FCA / Marc Porpilia Hockey Ministries International

2020, A Year in Review



In the back of our New Testament we find the short letter of 3 John. The apostle John wrote to Gaius, a friend in the gospel, commending him for his partnership with those who were involved in missions ministry. John wrote...

*Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth - 3 John 5-8*

## **BE FELLOW WORKERS FOR THE TRUTH...**

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We often recognize that Jesus has called his Church to make disciples wherever we are, however, in reflecting on John's words in 3 John, we also recognize that we have a command - and a privilege - to partner with those who make disciples in the places we are not. In 2020, Grace Road partnered with ministries and church planters all over the world who "have gone out for the sake of the name." As we look back, let's be reminded that "it is a faithful thing you do" to give and to pray for our gospel partners both near and far. As we look ahead to a new year, let's recommit ourselves to be "fellow workers for the truth" as the Lord gives us opportunity.

# **CHURCH PLANTS & MISSIONARIES**



## **9 3 CHURCH PLANTS MISSIONARIES**

### **CHURCH PLANTING - US**

- Renovation Church - **Syracuse, NY**
- Epiphany Church - **Camden, NJ**
- Restoration Church - **Bronx, NY**
- New City Fellowship - **Rochester, NY**
- Terra Nova Berkshires - **Massachusetts**
- New Hope Church - **Harlem, NY**

### **CHURCH PLANTING - GLOBAL**

- Jake Pursley - **Armenia**
- Jonathan Gilmore - **Palermo, Italy**
- Chris Davidson - **Scotland (20 Schemes)**

### **MISSIONARIES - GLOBAL**

- Ethan Helm - **Cambodia**
- Dan Hough - **Paraguay**
- Ruth Anna Spooner - **Minnesota (Deaf Harbor)**

# 2020 BUDGET



Grace Road Church is accredited by the Evangelical council for financial accountability (ECFA), which requires high standards of biblical accountability, board governance, financial transparency and integrity, and proper use of resources.

CATEGORY	2020 ACTUAL	2020 BUDGET	% ACTUAL
Personnel	\$687,355	\$874,038	29%
Sunday AM Gathering	\$59,252	\$79,055	3%
Facility	\$533,037	\$562,242	22%
GRC Ministries	\$47,414	\$169,101	2%
Local Mercy Ministries	\$25,667	\$28,300	1%
Church Planting	\$224,371	\$190,500	9%
Communications	\$15,516	\$15,800	1%
Administration	\$66,333	\$66,325	3%
Savings	\$706,585	-\$66,161	30%

## OFFERING

ACTUAL \$2,341,763.25 BUDGET \$1,900,000.00

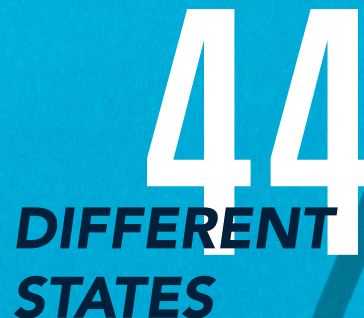


# GRACE ROAD ONLINE

## PODCAST STREAMS



When we had to close our doors in March 2020 due to the rising local COVID cases, we had no idea what the year ahead would look like. But our staff mobilized quickly and we were able to bring sermons straight into homes all around the region while so many were locked down at home. Now we're able to offer live-streamed services on Sunday mornings in a way to keep so many connected to the church while we wait for the day when we can all gather together again.



**Most Listened (Overall)**  
Grace Road Show - Conspiracy Theories

**Most Listened (LUKE SERMON)**  
Greatness & Humility Luke 9:46-50

 (IOS, Android, Roku, Apple TV, Windows, Web)



DOWNLOAD OUR APP 

OCT 28, 2020

# WANDA CRAWFORD

## THOSE WHO WENT HOME

**W**anda Crawford, known to many at Grace Road as “Miss Wanda”, went home to the arms of Jesus on October 28, 2020.

Wanda poured out her life for the children and families of Grace Road for more than nine years. She was a memorable and recognizable face to so many children, always bringing a hug or encouragement to the many of us who saw her week after week.

She loved teaching the kids and found joy when she could see they were “getting it” — truly passing on the love of the Bible and the good news of Jesus to the next generation. She leaves a massive hole in our ministry and Sunday gatherings. All who knew her will miss her and we look forward to seeing her again.



# A LETTER FROM KEVIN

## A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

2020 was certainly a year to remember. It was a year when so much of what we do was limited, but God showed Himself not to be. In previous years we gathered people, we did relational ministry, we worked to build community. And this year those all became dangerous or difficult. We never would have expected to cancel more than 20 services, not gather on Easter or Christmas Eve, or to encourage people to replace face-to-face community with online community! God has been at work through His people.

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**YET THROUGH IT ALL, GOD HAS SUSTAINED OUR CHURCH, BROUGHT PEOPLE TO FAITH, AND ADDED PEOPLE TO OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY.**

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## A YEAR OF SERVICE

As soon as the pandemic hit, we not only went to work moving our ministries online, we also went to work building teams to meet the still-unknown needs of our community during the pandemic. People from our church stepped up in big ways and delivered groceries (to friends and strangers), brought meals to doctors and nurses on the front lines, procured PPE for a medical group, and served the city by helping city agencies serve people in need. When everything changed, the love of Christ through his people was shining to the community.

## A YEAR OF PROVISION

When the closures started, our elders made an emergency budget to be able to allow our church to survive on what we expected would be a huge loss in income. But that loss never materialized. Our church stepped up in a big way, and people gave generously despite the uncertainty. We were able to meet the needs of people who lost jobs, we bought Christmas presents for families, we provided groceries for dozens of families who lost income, and we even gave large gifts to keep smaller churches afloat in difficult times. God met every need we had and more.

## A YEAR OF SUB-OPTIMAL CONNECTIONS

If anything doesn't fit the culture of our church, it is encouraging people to go to church online. We know that isn't how it should be. But nothing was how it should be this year. So as much as we look forward to connecting the right way in the months ahead, we were encouraged to see so many stay connected by watching sermons, zooming with groups, meeting in smaller settings, and making it work.

## LOOKING AHEAD

In 2020, we were definitely reminded that our plans are in God's hands and always subject to His sovereignty. But our sincere hope is that 2021 would be a year of rebuilding. We are hopeful that summer will be a time of re-connecting (through picnics, on decks, etc.) and that fall will be a time of returning to normal. We want to do lots of things to rebuild community, we want to re-emphasize our gospel-spreading mission, and we want to move our members back to in-person church rhythms when it is safe for all to come back. We are prayerful that that happens by the end of the year.

But we also want to see the Gospel advance. This month, we are announcing our plan to purchase and renovate a permanent campus for our church less than one mile from our current location. This will be the first time we have owned a building, and it will provide us opportunities to put down roots and establish a base of operations for multiplying churches around our region in years to come. 2021 could be a year of tremendous advance after a difficult pandemic.

After past pandemics, God brought revival. People came to Christ, churches were planted, regions were changed. Our prayer is that this year of emerging from COVID would also be a year when God mercifully brings mass faith and repentance to the people of our region. Ultimately, He has to do that work. But we are praying that He will, and that He would be gracious enough to allow us to be part of it.



WAD CHURCH

*" IN 2020, WE WERE DEFINITELY REMINDED THAT OUR PLANS ARE IN GOD'S HANDS AND ALWAYS SUBJECT TO HIS SOVEREIGNTY. "*



See You Next Year...