



Grace Episcopal Church

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Grace-Hinsdale Outreach Charter 2015 (Revision 19)

Outreach ministry represents the Church at work in Christ's name, stretching to meet the needs of the wider community and the world, not simply through charity¹ but by sharing the lives of others and receiving their gifts in ministry partnerships with Christ at the center. We at Grace Church, Hinsdale, are committed to outreach based on:

Our Baptismal Covenant:

- To proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ;
- To seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbor as ourselves; and
- To strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being.

The Mission Statement of Grace:

- To be a Christ-centered community of faith, sharing in worship, fellowship, education and outreach; and
- To build a solid foundation for our ever-expanding Circle of Grace.

Given these goals, Grace will put primary emphasis on *transformative* outreach – outreach that changes lives through ministry partnerships and also addresses injustices in the world. We seek to do this by:

Developing and funding Grace's own, relational, multifaceted, transformative outreach programs based on ministry partnerships that:

- Address the needs of an identifiable and proximate community through a multifaceted ministry (e.g., spiritual formation, worship, economic assistance, legal and financial counsel, food, clothing, housing, job counseling,);
- Change lives both at Grace and with our partners;
- Are interactive and interpersonally centered.
- Are focused on our partners' gifts to us as well as our gifts to them;
- Encourage parish-wide participation through time, talent, and gifts;
- Are prayerful and, when possible, include joint worship, formation, spiritual practice, evangelism, and allied projects;
- Encourage continuous development of mutual ministry, not just periodic events.

¹ Charity is defined by Northwestern Professor John McKnight, an advocate of asset-based community development, as "a one-way compensatory activity that never changes anything" (<http://bit.ly/1D3RIRD>). Charity for the poor is, however, a mandate of the Gospel.

Secondary emphasis will be placed on external outreach efforts, including:

- Funding organizations with outstanding area missions but limited parish engagement;
- Supporting important direct-service programs, recognizing they have less potential to fully engage the parish.²

Using these criteria, the Outreach committee at Grace will:

- Discern and evaluate ideas for new ministry partnerships that engage the parish on the levels of personal encounter, financial support, and spiritual enrichment.
- Assess current ministries to determine their budgetary requirements, parishioner involvement, people served, vitality, proximity to the parish, and degree to which they meet transformative goals by changing lives;
- The Committee will then assess which continuing ministries:
 - Already meet the goal of changing lives;
 - Can be enriched to further meet transformative goals; or
 - Have limited reach, no matter how valuable, and honor those who will continue to support them.

Finally, the Committee will:

- Select and develop plans to implement one wide-ranging new transformative ministry in 2015-16 as our major outreach focus;
- Select a limited number of direct-service outreach ministries to support;
- Make suitable recommendations to the Rector regarding the spiritual efficacy of these programs and to the Vestry regarding financial support; and
- Begin a stewardship process to increase the outreach budget to a tithe of the regular parish budget, an amount that would be sourced by revenue from general giving, our endowment, and fundraising programs. Through this process, an important discussion of our priorities as a congregation might emerge.

²

We will not fund medical charities or national organizations with advertising budgets.