

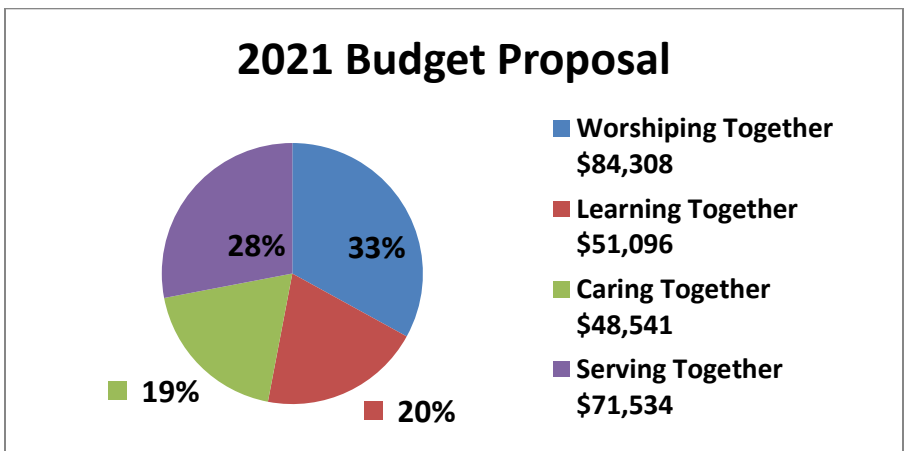


For our church, this has been a year unlike any other. As we have met for worship in our separate homes each week, we have nevertheless felt the bonds of fellowship. Being unable to meet together in person has reminded us of how important our family of faith is to us. We may be separated by space, but we are together by God's grace.

"Together by Grace" is our 2021 stewardship theme. This Narrative Budget describes the way that we share in ministry together, looking at our overall ministry in four areas:

- **Worshipping Together**
- **Learning Together**
- **Caring Together**
- **Serving Together**

Expenses such as salaries, maintenance, and utilities are apportioned to these four areas. The breakdown of expenses is as follows:



WORSHIPING Together

\$84,308 (33%)

Worship is the center of our life together as a church. Thoughtful and challenging preaching, inspiring music, prayer that opens us to God’s call, and congregational sharing help to make our worship of God a life-giving experience. We are blessed with a wonderful music program and with musicians of all ages who share their gifts with us.

Our worship services have gone online as a result of COVID-19, and over the past months our worship attendance has actually grown. We have added a Mid-Week Devotion on Thursday evenings. We look forward to returning to in-person worship and to being able to sing together again, and when we do, we will continue to offer an online option going forward.



Christian discipleship is a life-long calling, and our church provides opportunities for members of all ages to grow in faith. Church School classes include opportunities to learn the stories of the Bible, find encouragement and support, study the scriptures in an in-depth way, and discuss current issues in light of our faith. Over the past months our teachers have been wonderfully committed and creative in leading us, and we have continued to learn together as groups meet via Zoom or through conference calls.

Special studies are offered during Lent and at other times, and we look forward to again having in-person camp and conference opportunities. Our gifts help provide learning materials, help send children and youth to camp, and help pay registration fees for adult conferences, including conferences at Green Lake. Our gifts also help fund the technology that has become especially important.



We like to think of ourselves as a family of faith, and welcoming others to the family is very important to us. This has been more difficult when we are not meeting in person, of course, but we have continued to find ways to join in fellowship. Gathering in the Fellowship Hall after worship services has been replaced by gathering in Zoom breakout rooms. We have held online Trivia Nights, a Virtual Fall Festival, and more.



Caring ministry is expressed as our staff, deacons, and other members reach out those who are in need. In worship we take time to share prayer concerns and pray for one another. Shared communication through various print and electronic formats helps to build community. We have added a Virtual Coffee Shop that meets each week – an opportunity for sharing and chance to visit with friends that can be much-needed for those unable to get out during this time.

We look forward to potluck meals, hayrides, our cook-off, in person visits, and more. For now, we continue to care for one another, Together by Grace.



Our mission extends far beyond the walls of our building, and we are involved in hands-on ministry with neighbors in our community and beyond. Our Great Day of Service was postponed in 2020, and our planned 2021 mission trip to Puerto Rico in conjunction with the ABC/USA Biennial meeting in San Juan will not happen because of the pandemic, but we continue to find ways to support and be involved in mission.



We continue to support mission partners including CROP Walk, Center for Creative Justice, AMOS, Good Neighbor Emergency Assistance, Ames Ecumenical Housing, Habitat for Humanity, the Story County COVID-19 Emergency Fund for Immigrants, and more. We are among the leading congregations across the American Baptist Churches in gifts to United Mission, supporting ABC mission in our region, our country, and around the world. Your gifts have made it possible for us to provide assistance to individuals and families in Ames suffering financially because of the pandemic. And we look forward to renewing some of our hands-on efforts in the year ahead.

Together by Grace, we continue to share God's love and hope.