

# *Grace Presbyterian Church*

(picture of church)

**2009 Annual Report**

**Congregational Meeting Sunday, January  
31, 2010**

Grace Presbyterian Church  
105 Bailey Road  
Crystal City, MO 63019

(636) 937-3019

[www.gracechurch-pcusa.org](http://www.gracechurch-pcusa.org)

# Congregational Meeting

## Grace Presbyterian Church

October 18, 2009

Having announced a congregational meeting for two consecutive weeks, the Congregational Meeting of Grace Presbyterian Church was called to order at 12:05 PM for the purpose of electing 4 elders to the class of 2012, 12 deacons, 3 GEM members, and 7 people to the nominating committee. A quorum was declared and the moderator, Dr. Joseph Pallikkathayil opened with prayer.

Jerry Burhans, chair of the nominating team, presented the following slate of elders for the class of 2012: Sally Borgerson, Mary Orr, Barbara Schmidt, and Bill Sternberg. The moderator asked if there were any nominations from the floor; hearing none, he asked that a motion be made to accept this slate by acclamation. The motion passed.

Next, Jerry Burhans presented the names of the 12 to serve as Deacons. This was formerly our Compassion Team. The following names were presented: class of 2010- Don Hetherington, Monica Hetherington, Dale Houzenga, Toni Houzenga; class of 2011- Truman Askins, Betty Askins, Shirley Biere, Judy Null; class of 2012- Bob Chapman, Alta Chapman, Joan Groat, Julie Varady. The moderator asked if there were any nominations from the floor; hearing none, he asked that a motion be made to accept this slate by acclamation. The motion passed.

Next, Jerry Burhans presented the 3 names to serve a three- year term on the GEM team. They are: Robert Dennison, Mickey Portell, and Mark Trautwein. The moderator asked if there were any nominations from the floor; hearing none, he asked that a motion be made to accept this slate by acclamation. The motion passed.

Finally, Jerry presented the 6 names for the Nominating Committee Team for 2010 with the 7<sup>th</sup> person being nominated from the floor. The slate of 6 names are: Elders Jerry Burhans, Elder-elect Bill Sternberg, Deacon-elect Truman Askins, Deacon-elect Judy Null, Presbyterian Women representative, Joan Groat; Presbyterian Men's representative, Bob Chapman. The moderator asked for the congregation to nominate someone to serve on the Nominating Committee Team as an at-large member. Bob Chapman nominated Gail Lents. The moderator asked if there were any other nominations from the floor; hearing none, he asked that a motion be made to accept this slate by acclamation. The motion passed.

Moderator, Dr. Joseph Pallikkathayil, adjourned the congregational meeting at 12:15 PM with a prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan DeClue, Clerk of Session

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Rev. Joseph Pallikkithyill

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# Congregational Meeting

## Grace Presbyterian Church

### September 13, 2009

With a quorum declared present, the congregational meeting of Grace Presbyterian Church of Crystal City was called to order at 12 noon by Moderator, Joe Pallikkithyill.

The purpose of the meeting was to hear a report from the Pastor Nominating Committee and vote on accepting Rev. Dewey Johnson as the next pastor of Grace Presbyterian. The second was to approve the salary package, and the third was to dissolve the Pastor Nominating Committee and thank them for their service.

The PNC members individually spoke to the congregation about why they choose Rev. Johnson.

**Sally Borgerson, chair of PNC made a motion to call Dewey Johnson as the next pastor of Grace Presbyterian.** Since the motion came from the committee, no second is required.

After addressing two questions, a paper ballot was distributed. Ballots were collected and counted by Elders Pruneau, Fischer, and Stone. The ballots were counted in the sanctuary in the presence of the congregation.

**The vote was 128 Yes, 2 No.**

The moderator announced the vote and entertained a motion to call Dewey Johnson unanimously. The motion was moved by Vicky Brown and seconded by Jerry Burhans. The motion passed by voice vote.

Next, Elder and PNC member, Jerry Burhans presented the salary package to the congregation and made a motion to accept the terms of the call. The vote passed by a voice count. There were no nays.

Finally, the members of the PNC were presented with a framed certificate to thank them for their hard work.

Charlie Lents moved to dissolve the Pastor Nominating Committee and Chris Evens seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote. There were no nays.

Rev. Dewey and his wife, Cheri, were brought back into the sanctuary and he thanked the congregation for their support. He said he looks forward to beginning his work here on Nov. 8, 2009.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 PM.

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Susan DeClue, Clerk of Session

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Rev. Joseph Pallikkithyill

## Mission Statement:

*Grace Presbyterian Church of Crystal City, Missouri, while grounded in its rich past, lives in the present and looks to the future as it seeks to empower its members so that they realize their spiritual gifts and witness to God's love and grace. This witness will extend throughout the community and beyond to all of our neighbors in order to build bridges, to reach out with compassion, and to connect people with God.*

### In Memoriam

*Clarice Stinnett – July 21, 2009*

## Membership Statistics

### Gains

Profession of Faith Reaffirmation 19

Certificate of Transfer 10

Baptized Children 34

Total Gains: 29

### Losses

Certificate of Transfer 3

Death 1

Total Losses 4

Membership as of December 31, 2009     **213**

## Membership Broken Into Age Groups

25 and younger (active members)	22
26-45 years	39
46-55 years	26
56-65 years	52
65 years and older	74

# Staff

Pastor: Dewey Johnson  
Secretary: Aline Spence  
Organist: Mark Trautwein  
Choir Director: Kirk Jackson  
Bell Choir Director: Laura DeClue  
Custodian: Karen Schoon

## Elders in 2009

Bob Aucutt (2010)  
Jerry Burhans (2010)  
Larry Byrd (2011)  
Chris Evens (2011)  
Amy Petschonek (2010)  
Carolyn Pruneau (2011)  
Barbara Schmidt (2012)  
Paula Westbrook (2010)  
Mark Trautwein (2011)  
Mary Orr (became special advisor to Board of Deacons)  
Julie Varady (became Deacon)  
Raeann Stockham (youth)  
Susan DeClue (2009)  
Bob Cayse (2009)  
Richard Fischer (2009)  
Brenda Wilson (2009)

Susan DeClue—Clerk of Session  
Judy Young--Treasurer



## Pastor Nominating Committee

A Pastor Nominating Committee was elected and began work in the summer of 2008. Serving on this committee included: Chris Evens, Susan DeClue, Christine Cowan, Bill Lucas, John Stephens, Jerry Burhans with Sally Borgerson serving as chairperson. After composing and posting our Church Information Form, we began receiving Personal Information Forms (PIFs) in January 2009. During the year, the PNC meet almost every Monday evening (during the summer the PNC frequently met several times a week). In all, we received 154 PIFs. Beginning in May, we brought in 6 pastors to interview face-to-face and heard each one preach. In July, we unanimously offered the position to Rev. Dewey Johnson who comes to us from Sandia Presbyterian Church in New Mexico. His first Sunday was November 8, 2009. Rev. Johnson was duly installed on January 10, 2010.



# Building and Grounds Team 2009

The Buildings and Grounds Committee was pleased to serve Grace Presbyterian Church by maintaining the structure and grounds during the year of 2009. During the year much labor and care went into making our church and grounds as pleasing and appealing to not only our congregation but to the community as well. Challenges and emergency repairs do crop up frequently in an aging facility. Monies were spent to upgrade two of our four air conditioning units and a new roof was put on over the stairwell area to the Fellowship Hall. The work was contracted out along with new and larger guttering on that part of the church. We cleaned and repaired the catch basin for the fountain before it was given a new paint job. Keeping the fountain spraying water this summer was a challenge in itself. Frequent thunderstorms and power glitches were hard on the pump, safeguards have been installed in the electrical circuit at the fountain to minimize pump failures in the future. Contracts were let to remove two large, past life pine trees at the narthex area due to their age and bad shape from ice storms. They threatened the integrity of the church structure. At the same time, we had a gum tree removed on the other side of the church because its root system was in our main aged sewer line.

The day to day challenges to B & G was to keep Mother Natures' elements outside while keeping the water running within the building in proper water lines, devices and fixtures doing what it is supposed to do and once it was used keeping it in the sewer lines. We also maintained the electrical system of the church building. During the rainfall record setting summer of 2009 grass cutting, trimming and weeding was relentless all summer and fall. Things we take for granted are not always easy to maintain in a heavily used structure.

B & G accepted the challenge to build a gazebo on church grounds. Money was donated by the family of Mickey Bova to build the structure. The project took three weeks plus a lot of sweat and to numerous an amount of hamburgers to count to finish. The gazebo was dedicated in June on Mickey's birthday.

Things to address in 2010 are replacement of the other two AC units, roof inspections, lack of storage space, filling cracks and sealing the parking lot and stained glass window inspections. Last but not least is the main sewer line from the church to Taylor Ave. Due to the age and type of materials used at the time of installation this sewer line needs to be replaced. Bids for this project will be sought. The steeple and the lightning protection for it will be inspected when we do the roof inspections. We thank all the members of Grace Presbyterian Church who donated time, talent, tools and expertise to make B & G a successful committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert D. Aucutt  
Acting Chairman

# Stewardship Team 2009

Three members of the Stewardship Team, along with Pastor Joe, attended an all day stewardship workshop at Ladue Chapel Presbyterian Church in August. We heard presentations of leadership and techniques for stewardship drives. Rev. Karl Travis' "Stewardship and the Generations " was among the most helpful.

After several team meetings, the following actions/recommendations included:

- Recommended production of a "narrative budget
- Helped Budget & Finance Team create narrative budget
- Recommended three stewardship sermons. Rev. D. Johnson readily complied
- Instructed the secretary to produce a " Step Chart for 2009 Giving"
- Helped produce a comparison of Grace Church giving for 2006, 2007, and 2008
- Composed a new "Time & Talent" pledge sheet
- Helped the secretary ready the envelopes for mailing to the congregation that included a cover letter, a pledge card, a "Time & Talent" pledge sheet, and a comparison of giving sheet in each
- Set November 22 as Dedication Sunday
- Instructed secretary to send thank you letters to all those who pledged

Note that we did not include a wish list in this year's letter. We thought it best to wait until Rev. Johnson has had a chance to get a feel for Grace Church's needs and get his input. In spite of the poor economy, the stewardship drive produced a good increase over last year.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert Cayse, Chair

## *LAW OF SOMEDAY*

We're just married and getting ourselves established financially. **Someday** we'll get serious about our sharing.

Our children are young, and they're hideously expensive! We're doing our best to stock up for their college educations. **Someday** we'll get serious about our sharing.

The children are gone and we have just a few years to invest for our retirement. **Someday** we'll get serious about our sharing.

We've retired now, and we live on a fixed income.

**Someday...**

# Christian Education Team 2009

The Christian Education Team is devoted to providing a fully rounded Christian Education to the children and adults of Grace Presbyterian Church. We offer Sunday School classes for all ages, from pre-school through high school and several classes for adults.

Each year, Christian Education also sponsors numerous other programs and events. 2009 had no shortage of these programs.

February 8, 2009 – CE hosted a Mosticolti Dinner as a fundraiser for Vacation Bible. The food was delicious and it was well attended.

April 5, 2009 – CE presented the annual Symbols of Easter program. The youth Sunday School classes demonstrate the legends of the Easter season, from why we use lilies at Easter to the Old Rugged Cross.

April 11, 2009 - CE sponsored the famous Easter Egg hunt for kids 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and younger, complete with the Easter Bunny. There was also a scavenger hunt for kids 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The children all get treats and the Easter Bunny reads them a story.

Summer 2009 – CE provided a fun filled Sunday School program, complete with breakfast.

July 12 -16, 2009 – CE presented Vacation Bible School. Discovery Canyon was this year's theme. The kids discovered the word of God through stories, games, science and crafts.

Sept 13, 2009 – Rally Day is always a fun time in the church. Rally Day is the time when families “Rally” together and return to their commitment to attend church and Sunday School. CE provides the meat and drinks for a great carry in dinner, as well as the ever-popular GRACE bingo and cakewalk.

October 25, 2009 - CE sponsors a Halloween party, complete with costumes, games and supper.

December 6, 2009 – CE presents the Hanging of the Greens program, where the children help to decorate the church, while remembering the traditions and legends of the season.

These programs take a lot of help from a great group of dedicated volunteers. As CE team leader, I would like to take this time to thank everyone for his or her service. If you would like to be a part of the vitally important part of the church, please see me.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Evens, Chair



# Gifts, Endowments, Memorials 2009

## GEM

GEM met the prescribed four times during the year, with following results:

- Scholarship of \$700.00 awarded to Carrie Evans (Funds from the 2008 distribution of the annuity fund were used)
- New plaque for memorials was hung in the Narthex
- 200 new hymnbooks were purchased
- The Bldg & Grounds Team completed gazebo; the Loretta “Mickey” Bova family donated total cost of \$13,000.
- No distribution from the annuity fund for 2009 (The balance did not meet the spending rule of Nov. 2005)
- 23 undesignated and 73 designated contributions to the Memorial Fund were received during 2009 (up to Nov.8)
- In 2010, GEM will meet on Feb. 8, May 10, Aug.9, and Nov. 8 at 6 PM

**The beginning and closing balances were:**

<u>12-31-2008</u>	<u>11-8-2009</u>
Undesignated ; \$1275.16	\$373.45
Designated : \$12,395.31	\$2162.72
Friends of F. \$888.88	\$2625.62
Endowment \$75,490.00	\$89,256.00

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Cayse, Chair



# Mission Team 2009

## Items Collected August-December

- School supplies 37
- Pencils 1177
- Food 664
- Home items 53
- Personal items 66
- Clothes 112 pieces of clothing
- Toys (Collection in Dec.) 150

## Mission Trip To Mexico

A small group of adult members have been planning a mission trip to Puentes de Cristo in Mexico March 13-20, 2010. Puentes de Cristo is a small PCUSA-sponsored mission located on the border near Brownsville, Texas. To help raise the funds necessary, the group has sold nachos at the Fall Festival, hosted a Mexican Luncheon, and sold autographed copies of books written by Rev. Johnson. The group still needs to raise about \$2500 more in order to pay for the trip. This will be the first mission trip in the 119 years of Grace Presbyterian's history.

The group consists of: Sally Borgerson, Vicky Brown, Jerry Burhans, Chris Evens, Susan DeClue, Barb Schmidt, and Laura Pigg.



## Music and Worship Team 2009

Grace Presbyterian Church celebrated 52 regular worship services, plus a healing service, a Maundy Thursday service, an early Easter morning service, and the traditional Christmas Eve service. The team scheduled all of the worship leaders for the services and will be utilizing a rotation of six different ones for 2010.

There were five weddings performed at Grace. The team has revised the wedding booklet, and it will be republished this year. After soliciting applications, Linda Stephens was hired as a wedding coordinator, replacing Susan DeClue. Amy Petschonek continues as the other coordinator. Their fees are paid for by the wedding couple, not by the church.

Following the resignation of long time choir director, Marty Johnson, the team compiled a list of capable directors in the area and forwarded it to the Personnel Team, who subsequently hired Kirk Jackson to fill the position. Laura DeClue has taken over the position of bell choir director, with a choir of about 10 people. The director's salary for 2009 was paid from special donations received for that purpose, but for 2010 the position has been included as a salary paid by the church. Additional supplies for the bell choir have also been purchased.

After reviewing several possible new hymnals, the team spearheaded a drive to purchase 200 copies of "The Hymnal for Worship and Celebration" to replace the 1955 version of the "Presbyterian Hymnal." At a cost of only \$10 apiece, all of these hymnals plus the organist's copy and bell director's copy were paid for through private donations. An additional 25 copies have since been purchased by the same means. Most of the old hymnals have been donated to another church.

Communion was prepared for and served to 1283 people at 12 services, including two outdoor communions in the park. The schedule of the celebrations of communion for 2010 reflects the timing of a more liturgically significant calendar rather than an arbitrary once a month celebration previously used.

On the occasions of Pastor Joe Pallikkathayil's absences, the team arranged six Sundays of pulpit supply, ranging from previous interim pastor Rev. Tom Clifton to various executive officers of the Presbytery as well as other retired ministers. All were well received.

Under the direction of non-team members Amy Petschonek and Barb Schmidt, the church was specially decorated for Easter and Christmas. Thanks go to all that helped. The team's budget also provides for the altar flower arrangements that are not donated by congregants, as well as the palms on Palm Sunday.

The team scheduled and arranged for the six Easter season banner readings and the five Advent candle lightings and readings.

Prior to Rev. Johnson's arrival, the chair worked with the church secretary in organizing and arranging the Sunday bulletins. Team members for 2009: Don Cavins, Jr., Arlene Groat and Brenda Wilson. After several years of serving on the team, Arlene Groat is being replaced by Laura Irelan. The rest of the team will remain the same. Thanks to all the members for their service to Grace this year.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mark Trautwein



# Clerk's Report 2009

- Our church website was completed in 2009 ([www.gracechurch-pcusa.org](http://www.gracechurch-pcusa.org)). We also offer a listing of prayer requests, sermons (both in text and audio format), and a weekly pastor BLOG. A calendar of church events is also available. The Olin Mills pictorial directory can also be accessed from the church website and we have our own collection of photo galleries.
- A new computer was purchased for the secretary along with a new laptop for the pastor. A small portable projection box was purchased that allows us to connect a computer and display presentations on a large screen. The old computer was moved to the Kinder Church room. A new copier and color laser printer, and a new television and DVD were purchased.
- Grace Presbyterian joined the Abitibi Paper Recycling program and we added a paper bin to the parking lot. The proceeds from the paper program are directed to the mission trip fund.
- Vicky Brown served as Clerk of the Session until August 2009. The session elected Susan DeClue as the new Clerk of Session. Vicky is currently enrolled at Eden Seminary and has been accepted as an official Inquirer. Mark Trautwein has volunteered to be a liaison between Eden, Vicky, and Grace.
- Christine Cowan was recognized as Grace Presbyterian's representative at the annual Celebration of Aging luncheon in 2009.
- Our church began holding All-Team meetings once a month to encourage participation and communication among our various groups
- The Session adopted our Five Core Principals: GRACE—Give sacrificially, Reach out, Attend Worship, Cultivate Gifts, Engage in devotional activities through the week
- Biblical Timelines were inserted in the covers of the hymnals and pew Bibles
- Mark Trautwein was appointed to be our church liaison between Eden Seminary and Vicky Brown. Vicky was accepted as an Inquirer at Eden this past year
- Session elected a variety of elders to serve as Commissioners to Presbytery meetings throughout the year

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan DeClue  
Clerk of Session



# Financial Information

Funds Balance as of December 31, 2009

## Check Book Funds

Building Fund	3,127.10
CD Proceeds	8,142.60
Compassion Team	200.72
Mission to Malawi	678.45
VBS/Bova Memorial	246.40
Youth/Grace	1,006.18
Youth/Grant	629.21
Mission to Mexico	<u>1,118.23</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$15,193.89</b>
Check Book Balance Dec. 31, 2008	9,140.04
Building Fund Money Market	20,408.31
Certificate of Deposits	29,404.86
Bridge Loan/Rev. Johnson	76,857.50

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy Young, Treasurer

## Compassion Ministry 2009

The Compassion Ministry has been committed to many different areas of showing love and concern for our members and others.

We provide transportation, shop for groceries for shut-ins, and give a sympathetic ear to those experiencing grief. Many cards and phone calls are done monthly, not only for the shut-ins but other members of the church. Those members and others who can not attend church are provided Communion monthly. In 2009, 78 Communion were given and we all feel blessed to be able to provide this service.

Several ladies of the church have crocheted or knitted Prayer Shawls to be given to those members or others who are ill at home or in the hospital. We have sent shawls to Canada, Georgia, and Florida. We feel this is a blessing to touch someone who needs a tender and loving reminder that God is always there for them. In 2009, a total of 42 shawls were given.

Each member of this ministry was given a list of church members (not shut-ins) to contact by card or phone to just to let them know we care.

We have added the Care Notes to the church as an aid in helping anyone in need, grief or a particular issue in their life they are trying to deal with.

I feel we have had a successful year and are now looking forward to being Deacons of our church and being able to show compassion and the love of God in many more ways.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Orr



# Presbyterian Women 2009

We started the year by hosting the Winter Gathering for the Presbytery of Giddings Lovejoy. Over 100 women in the South Cluster attended the event. We also presented 80 blankets to the Farmington Children's Home. In February, we mailed Valentine Boxes (care packages) to members who are attending colleges and universities.

March found the PW attending World Day of Prayer at Hillside Presbyterian in House Springs. We had the Birthday Objective as our monthly program with Gayle Quinton as the speaker. When there was a Lenten service at church, the PW served refreshments. In April, the PW attended the Spring Gathering at the St. Charles Presbyterian Church in St. Charles.

May found us very busy preparing for the annual Mother's Day Party. At the Fiesta, 141 attended including the workers and servers. This was a great success. We installed the following new officers for the new year: Mary Orr, Moderator; Pat Sweet, Vice Moderator; Clarice Stinnett, Secretary; Sue Byrd, Corresponding Secretary; Joan Groat, Treasurer, and Jan Aucutt, Historian. In July, Clarice passed away and Sue Byrd replaced her as secretary and Mary Lucas took the corresponding secretary office.

On June 2, PW hosted a Father/Son Carnival and 49 attended including the workers. This was vacation time for the PW. We served a bereavement dinner for the family and friends of Clarice Stinnett to left us in death on July 21. The men and women of the church made the Blood Drive on Aug 17, which was held at the church, a success. The Red Cross collected 31 productive units. The PW served sandwiches along with what the Red Cross provided. On Aug. 22, PW welcomed our new Circle #5 with a get-together luncheon.

September was very busy with the making and canning of the apple butter. On Sept 18-19, many workers were up before dawn to prepare the fire and tents for the day. We canned 112 ½ pints and 546 pints, making a total of 658 jars to sell at the Fall Festival on Oct. 3.

In October, PW Circles began to collect quarters for the immigrant families living in St. Louis for use in the laundry mats. The PW funded the welcoming reception for Rev. Dewey and Cheri Johnson. PW served a bereavement dinner for the family and friends of Cecelia Cohoon who passed away on Oct. 8.

On November 18, PW presented a check for \$318 to the Rescue Mission. This is the percentage of the profit of the Fall Festival. The PW had Ed Groat hang a door on the closet in the entrance to Fellowship Hall and absorbed the cost. PW made a trip to Josephine's on Dec. 3. On Dec. 5 we had our Cookie/Candy sale and the profit made provided money for three families to have a nice Christmas. On Dec. 12, PW hosted a Christmas luncheon with 41 attending. A nice time was had by all.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Orr, Moderator of Presbyterian Women



## Pastor's Terms of Call

Salary	\$26,400
Housing	\$39,600
<b><u>Effective Salary</u></b>	<b><u>\$66,000</u></b>
Retirement/Health	\$20,790
Travel/Professional Development	\$7,500
Vacation	4 Weeks
Study Leave	2 Weeks

\*The Pastor's Terms of Call were presented and voted on by the members at the September 13 Congregational Meeting



# Evangelism Ministry 2009

Evangelism Team had a very busy year. Some of the highlights of 2009 included:

- Identified and welcomed visitors to Grace; encouraged to attend Explorers class with Pastor Joe and worked to acclimate them into Grace
- Received 29 members for the year
- Updated our membership rolls
- Assisted Pastor Joe with the Spiritual Gifts Class with 28 attending three sessions
- Sponsored a New Member Dinner on May 31
- Visited many members in their homes
- Had two “Get Togethers” for visitors and new members in order to get to know them better
- Organized a new Pictorial Directory which can be accessed through our website
- Continued to improve our hospitality through additional greeters
- Planned a dedication ceremony following worship on June 21 for the gazebo
- Organized Friends Sunday on July 19 with Bar-be-cue provided by nationally award- winning cooks, live music in the gazebo and inflatable activities for the youth; Ill members wore white shirt with bandana-- estimated that we had 200 people attend.
- Promoted 40 days of prayer prior to event for those that were invited to attend whether through invitation by member or from canvassing our local community
- Hosted “Music in the Park” was August 1 with Chris Talley and her band along with the Pickin’ Chicks performing in the gazebo. School supplies were donated and went to the “Backpack for Kids”.
- Updated the attendance registration forms and followed up with members who have not been in attendance
- Contacted area motels to confirm that Grace was on their list of area churches
- Sent Get Well and Sympathy cards when needed

Respectfully Submitted,

Barbara Schmidt



## Pastor's Report – Last Two Months of 2009

Cheri and I moved into our house Monday, Nov. 2, 2009, and I started work as your pastor shortly thereafter. You have been gracious in welcoming us to Grace and have gone out of your way to help us find our way around. Thanks.

One of the comments that has been made to me quite often is, "I guess this is different from what you're used to." My response is sometimes yes, and sometimes no.

Both Cheri and I are used to a jillion more days/year of sunshine than has been the case since we moved here.

We're both suffering withdrawal pains having to do with the absence of New Mexico's version of Mexican food, especially green chili.

We've been able to get in to see doctors much quicker than we could in Albuquerque. Pleasant surprise.

The line at both post offices is a jillion times shorter than in Albuquerque, and there are enough clerks to provide service much quicker.

Not much difference in where we bank or get our prescription drugs, just different locations.

Don't get us started, though, on the difference between the Albuquerque Journal and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

When we moved in we heard a fellow on the radio answer the question, "Are the people of Missouri friendly?" He said, "Well, they're not unfriendly." His experience was that many wouldn't say "hello" on the street, but they would speak to him if he spoke to them first. That has been our experience also, and different from New Mexico. There are those in NM who have Texas roots. They go out of their way to say, "howdy!" There are also those from back east who are not in the habit of greeting others, period.

But all the above is superficial. The essence of our being at Grace is to be with you in the work of the church. Any given congregation is, of course, different from another; still, all congregations are trying to carry out Jesus' work in a world that has changed from what so many of us once knew. We look forward to working with you as we face this challenge at Grace. -DJ