

Exciting News from the Serve Council
November 2018

Dear Friends at Grace Covenant,

In 2015, Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church launched a three-year capital campaign to improve ministry environments, including facilities, program development and strengthening partnerships. As a part of this campaign, our church tithed a portion of funds raised to invest in local and international ministry partners of the church, allowing for this one-time grant opportunity, "Grace Cares Impact Grant."

The Serve Council is excited to share with you the three local organizations that have been selected for a one-time, capacity building investment. The theme of the capital campaign was, "Grounded in faith, growing in service," and we believe that our congregation is called into these three partnerships in ways that *ground* us in Christ's presence in this world and help us to *grow* into who He is calling us to be.

- **Faith 4 Justice Asheville** is a coalition of ecumenical and multi-faith clergy and faith leaders provoking justice for black and brown bodied people through discernment, advocacy, capacity building in racial equity, and providing a ministry of presence with impacted communities. F4J builds a shared language and analysis of structural oppression in ecumenical and multi-faith communities in Asheville, strengthens the practice of faith centered reflection that leads to actively dismantling white supremacy in faith institutions in Asheville, centers black leadership and black communities in ministries and missions of faith institutions in Asheville, and builds collective faith-based strategies to support black-led community initiatives in Asheville that address state sanctioned violence. Grace Cares funds were matched by The Cathedral of All Souls to provide one year of funding for Faith 4 Justice.
- **Steady Collective** is dedicated to promoting the wellness of people who use drugs through empowerment and respectful collaboration. Its goal is to improve overall community health by reducing the rate of drug overdose and the spread of infectious disease with education, advocacy and direct services. In 2017, North Carolina experienced the second fastest increase in overdose deaths in the nation. In addition, rates of Hepatitis C and Hepatitis B (often spread through needle sharing among people who inject drugs) continue to rise in North Carolina. Offering non-judgmental, low threshold care, Steady Collective has been able to get resources and referrals to communities that often are excluded from conventional medical and treatment institutions. In the first quarter of 2018, 935 opioid overdose reversals were reported to the North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition; ten percent of those statewide reversals were done with naloxone kits distributed by Steady Collective. Grace Cares funds will be used to purchase a vehicle for mobile outreach to serve folks living in and around Pisgah View Apartments and Hillcrest Apartments.

- **Homeward Bound's AHOPE Day Center** addresses the challenge of homelessness in Asheville and Buncombe County. AHOPE serves as the primary space where people experiencing homelessness come to receive basic needs services (coffee, access to showers, mail, telephones, and storage) as well as assessments and referrals to housing. Homeward Bound is preparing to renovate AHOPE to enhance effectiveness in working with guests to help them secure permanent housing; to increase hospitality to the large number of folks who are in need of AHOPE's program; and to continue to provide a safe, comfortable place for guests, volunteers and staff to engage in offering and receiving essential services and where trust can be built. Grace Cares funds will be used to support one of the first steps in the renovations – replacing the roof, which will allow Homeward Bound to continue to address the needs of approximately 150 homeless individuals who come to the Day Center each day in need of basic needs services and assessments for housing.

We look forward to sharing opportunities to engage more deeply with these partners in 2019. Faith 4 Justice has already had a presence in our congregation working with Session, Councils, and Teams and with educational opportunities for the whole congregation during 2018.

We have felt blessed to hear the goals and dreams of all of our ministry partners who applied for the Grace Cares funds, and we are grateful to share this good news with you now.

In partnership,

2018 Serve Council: Jamie Beasley (*Grace Cares chair*), Amy Fowler, Kelley Griffith, Keaton Hill, Nancy Kramer (*Grace Cares team*), Bonnie Parker, Susan Presson, Anne Sayers (*Grace Cares team*), Anne Callison Stokely (*Grace Cares team*), Tamara Puffer, Kate Shem (*Serve Council Co-Chair*), Jennifer Vogel (*Serve Council Co-Chair*)