

# *GRACE*

*from the*

# *BEGINNING*

*A brief history of the  
Rhineland Foursquare Church  
For seventy-five years  
1932-2007*



*Grace Foursquare Church  
Rhineland, Wisconsin  
June 2007*

*Celebrating the Family of Grace*  
*June 7, 1932—2007*



**Observing 75 Years of**  
*God's Blessings on*  
**Grace Foursquare Church**

*To God be the Glory!*

*Welcome!*

*...to all families, friends, and our many visitors from near and far. We are looking forward to celebrating the goodness of the Lord together this weekend. We will reminisce, sing His praises, and give Him thanks. We will take time to reflect on His glory—and acknowledge that, “Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.”*

## Introduction

In this seventy-five year walk down memory lane, many facts are from the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History Booklet written by Gerda Turn; the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet; and personal experiences of the writer, who grew up in the church from 1939 on. Much was gleaned from reminiscing over the years with some of the charter members, and other “oldtimers,” most of who are gone to be with the Lord. All have left an indelible imprint on our lives as precious friends and mentors. Every one in his/her own special way was, and still is included, the embodiment of Grace Foursquare Church. Perhaps you know others who should be included, people like—*Grandma Edd, Blythe Hubbard Sr., Rev. Atwood and Esther Eddy, Margaret (Eddy) Sherry, Maude (Eddy) Freund, Emma (Thomas) Freund, Mabel Wilcox, Virginia Apfel, Agnes Shaver, Mary Belling, Gerda Turn, Lillian Gross and Elaine (Larson) Freund, to name a few.* This writer has had the privilege of knowing these early saints personally, of growing up under their influence, and as an adult, counting most of them among her dearest friends. What a precious heritage!

**If you are wishing they could be here this weekend—I believe they are!**



**We are so thankful for the presence today of Elaine (Larson) Freund, who is the only living charter member still worshipping with us.**

This brief journey is not intended to be an absolute account of all events and special memories, which are too numerous to recall. It is only a reminiscent overview of how the grace of God has faithfully wended its way through the 75-year history of this His church. Except for pastors, it does not specifically name all those who have been so divinely instrumental at various points along the way. There are so many, and in our hearts, we respectfully give recognition and gratitude to all the blessed co-laborers with God who have gone before...

Compiled and written by Ginna (Phillips) Krefl

## The Beginning

*(The following is an excerpt from a letter received just before the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, from Mrs. Duane Wood, formerly Rev. Betty Bradigan, founder of the Rhinelander Foursquare Church).*

"There wasn't any special reason for my coming to Rhinelander. I had started a church in Beaver Dam, one in Clintonville, and one in Ashland; then saw that Rhinelander had no full Gospel Church and headed for it. Katherine Hendrickson was one of our Ashland converts and she accompanied me. Those were the days of faith! I don't believe we had \$15.00 between us.

We rented a room right near the railroad station. We had enough money to get a few posters made. We found Howe's Hall. The Howe's were very kind and we later rented a cabin from them.

Katherine and I, with a paint bucket and a couple of paintbrushes, walked for miles and painted every big rock in sight. We invited everyone to come to Howe's Hall. We held street meetings...just the two of us (and the Lord)...and we always managed to get a crowd.

Howe's Hall was away from town and we wondered just what kind of attendance we would get. It was actually amazing! The people never let us down. Also, our needs were abundantly provided. People brought us food, and we were invited out a lot."



Betty Bradigan and  
Katherine  
Hendrickson



## Grace from the Beginning

It was God's grace, pure and simple, on that balmy June night of 1932, that led two young women evangelists, Rev. Miss Betty Bradigan and her helper, Miss Katherine Hendrickson to the downtown streets of Rhinelander, Wisconsin.

The country was in the throes of the Great Depression. The National Church of the Foursquare Gospel itself was a fledgling organization. In the greater Los Angeles area, where it was headquartered, they had begun to draw great attention and respect, as hundreds came day after day to the soup kitchens of Angelus Temple to receive nourishment. However, up here in northern Wisconsin, that kind of *news*, even if it was heard, went unnoticed. Betty Bradigan had been influenced by the ministry of Foursquare's founder, Aimee Semple McPherson, and being full of the Holy Spirit and determination, had set out to preach the gospel and plant full gospel churches wherever God's grace led her. That night, like many before in other towns, it was *grace* that held Betty and Katherine to that street corner amid jeers and protests, and of course, much curiosity. Accompanied by an old accordion, they shared in melodious strains the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the love of God.

It was grace, week after week, that prompted curious street audiences to accept the invitation to join them in a borrowed building, and hear more of this love of which the "girls" so joyously sang. They came one by one, two by two, and many, moved by the Holy Spirit, heeded the message and knelt at a primitive altar of repentance, forgiveness and, new life in Christ—saved by *grace!* By faith, they began a new journey as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. *"Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."* (Acts 2:47)



Their church building was Howe's Hall, the old community dance hall and meeting place. The girls (as they were often affectionately referred to) had rented it to use each Sunday morning for \$5.50 per month in the summer, and \$7.00 per month in winter. In the often freezing and even sub-zero temperatures of our northern Wisconsin winters, a few of these hearty Rhinelander pioneers of Pentecostal Christianity, would trudge through the snow and ice, early on Sunday morning, to the hall. They started the fire, then swept and cleaned up from the Saturday night dance and revelry that had ended not *too* many hours before. They set up benches made from rough-cut wooden planks, (splinters and all) stretched across old saw horses, and the dance hall was transformed into a temple of worship. As they all sang the praises of God, some kept stoking the old double-barrel stove in an effort to thwart the worst of the chill; many were content that the fire of the Holy Spirit would warm their inner man despite any outward chill.

**YES! They held *church*, and the presence of God presided!**

It should be mentioned here that early on, an annual “wood festival” was started. The rented hall was cold, and most of the wood provided was green and took several hours to heat the “church.” So, each year a grant was sought from someone who would offer the wood for the cutting. Men and women alike would head for the woods with axes and saws for a couple days of wood harvesting. As the men cut wood, the women prepared meals; and the woods became a virtual symphony of axe to wood, accompanied by singing, shouting, and laughter. Two of the women, each with a big truck, hauled the sawed wood into town. A good time was had by all! And the hall was much warmer...

### **New Leaders and a Charter**

Before long Sister Betty and Sister Katherine moved on, confident that God had inspired a small band of disciples to carry on until He sent a new pastor.

In the first several years of the church’s history, there were several pastors who remained for only short periods of time, some only one to three months. Perhaps this wild and untamed Northwoods, or the effects of the depression deterred them. Whatever the reason, each one had a definite ministry, which helped the church to grow. In between those pastors, the faithful congregation carried on, assured in their hearts and spirits that God had a special plan, and a special man for every hour.

The early pioneers were the Rev. William Stoval, the Rev. and Mrs. George Grant, and Rev. Ed and Maxine Sorenson. In November of 1933, Rev. and Mrs. Guilliams arrived. He *organized, strategized, methodized, and baptized*—and brought about the chartering of the Rhinelander, Wisconsin, Foursquare Church! Forty-five members were required for a charter; they had forty-seven! In April of 1933, the first missionary offering was taken. The first annual pledge for missions in 1934 was \$100.00, which was surpassed. “Brother” Guilliams also taught strongly on tithing and fasting; and despite the conditions created by the Depression, this infant church continued to grow. *This seems to be an early confirmation of the spiritual value of tithing and fasting.*



Rev. George Grant

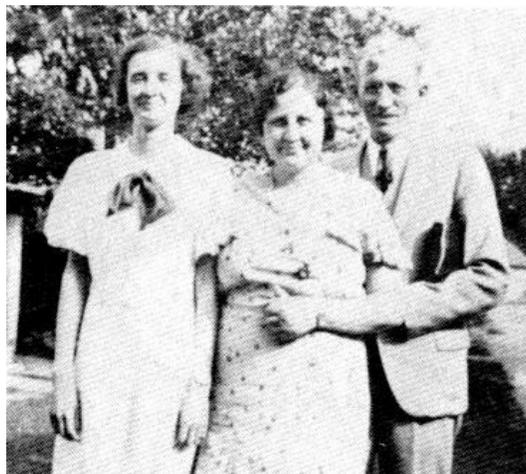


Rev. & Mrs. William Stoval



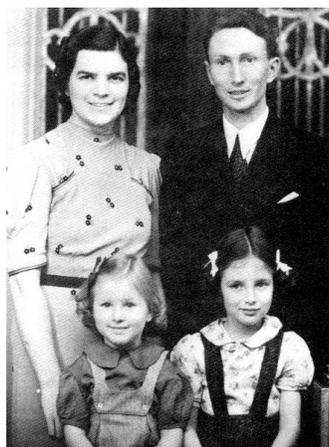
Rev. Ed & Maxine Sorenson

The Rev. O.R. Streepy and daughter arrived in 1934. In December the first steps toward real organization began; in January of 1935, the first church election was held. Under their leadership, a fund was started, and a church lot purchased in 1936, for \$600. The Streepys left in October of 1936.



### Growing in Grace

Grace continued; and before the end of the 1930's it reached far beyond the boundaries of this small northern logging town when three of the church youth left for L. I. F. E. Bible College in Los Angeles to become Ministers of the Gospel—the first of *many* to follow. Year after year the Church has fostered pastors, missionaries, teachers, youth leaders, counselors, and *hundreds* of spirit-led lay people, who have remained faithful to God and loyal to His Church and its mission.



Each pastor and leader sent here by *grace* has been anointed and God-led to guide the church in a specific direction...Rev. and Mrs. M.R. Evans and daughters, Joyce and Joan, came in October of 1936. God blessed the church under their ministry for 13 ½ years! Multiple blessings were received as Sister (Cecelia) Evans was *also* an anointed preacher of the Word—and how she could play the piano! As I recall, she gave some of the girls in the church piano lessons. (*Interesting to have come full circle in this sense, as LuAnn Messerli also gives piano lessons*). *All of our pastors' wives have been good examples of a Proverbs 31 woman: women after God's own heart!*

We were always blessed with good musicians, and at this juncture, had an orchestra. Brother Evans played quite a trumpet! He and Sister Cecelia encouraged folks who had never played an instrument to get involved and try-try- try!

The Evanses were strongly Sunday school minded. Attendance in Sunday school (now *Sunday Bible classes*) is always an interesting factor in any growing church. On April 8, 1934, it went over the 50 mark with 51 in attendance. April 1, 1939, the 100 mark was reached; and on March 24, 1940, Easter Sunday, just two months before work on a new church began, the Sunday School attendance reached a new high of 183!



Virginia Apfel

## Time to Build

It was during the Evanses' ministry that the first church on Davenport Street was started and completed. They had a vision for the church, one that was decidedly matched by the people. By the end of 1939, the decision was made to pursue that vision.

The work began in May of 1940. Equipped with determination and the Spirit of God, like Zerubbabel they began—with shouts of Grace! Grace on it! (Zachariah 4: 6, 7 NKJV)

Ordinary parishioners and the pastors became carpenters, log setters, plumbers, electricians, painters, *AND* financiers. The people gave, and gave graciously, by faith. *And grace was multiplied.* At no time was any debt incurred for the building itself. Each project was completed only as the money came in. As building got underway, interested folks who did not attend the church made donations. Even the paper mill made generous donations of steel and more.

In the meantime, the hall was sold and had to be vacated. During most of the building project, Sunday worship services were held on Sunday afternoon in the old Methodist church. Charles Wesley must have been pleased to hear such worship and praise to God! The mid-week services were held in homes and very well attended no matter what the weather; folks were hungry for the teaching of the Word and in seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

*(If I may be permitted a personal note: Except for grace, this writer could not be penning these memoirs. It was about this time my beloved grandmother began to take me to Sunday school and church. One Sunday afternoon in response to Pastor Evans' invitation, at about age 6, I knelt at that borrowed altar and asked Jesus to come into my heart. The two praying with me were a dear saint, Gerda Turn, who remained here, faithful 'til her passing in the late seventies, and one of the young men, Delmar Walker, who would soon be off to L.I.F.E Bible School and would spend his lifetime preaching the gospel elsewhere. That grace of God has followed me all of my life.)*



October of 1941 was an answer to many prayers and the fruits of many labors when the new log church building was occupied. Though it was not completely finished, to that group of worshippers, it was equal to any of the grandest cathedrals in the world!

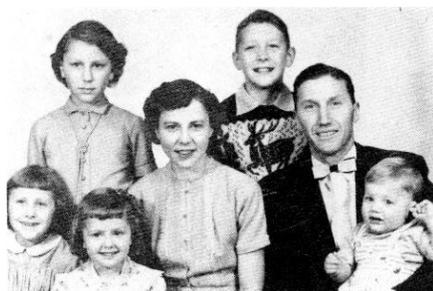
On the third Sunday of January 1950, Brother Evans preached his last sermon. It was a sad day in many ways, they were so dearly loved. But we knew that God would continue to provide the right man for the hour. So many good things were wrought by the hand of God and their faithfulness during the more than 13 years of their ministry, we can only say thank you, God, and thank you, Brother and Sister Evans.

Rev. Lynn Charter and family followed the Evanses as pastors. After about one year, he was chosen by the Foursquare Missions Department to be a member of a special gospel team being sent to the Far East. Upon his return to Rhinelander, he announced he would be retiring and going into the evangelistic field.



Rev. and Mrs. Vernon Robinson had filled in during the absence of the Charters, but could not fill the permanent vacancy, because of ill health.

Rev. and Mrs. Leland Brown and five children followed them.



Rev. and Mrs. Franklin Brown and five children replaced them in August of 1953. The Lord blessed, and many came to know the Lord during their ministry, which took us up to the next milestone.

### **A Silver Anniversary**

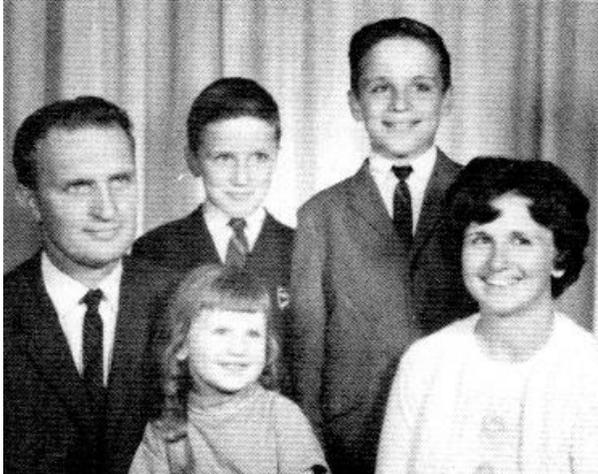
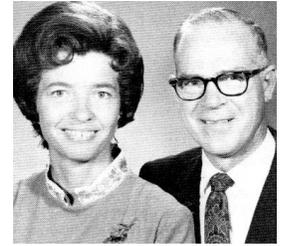
July 3, 4, and 5, 1958, found us observing twenty-five silver-lined years of blessing and growth *through* God—*for* God. Still, there were new manifestations to come, abundantly, exceedingly *more*! The Franklin Browns left for other endeavors following the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.

### **Forward to the next 25 Years**

The Rev. and Mrs. Herman Rosenberger and family, still fondly remembered by many, arrived in late July, 1958, and ministered for four years. During this period quite a number of our young people left for Mount Vernon Bible College in Mt. Vernon, Ohio a new extension of LIFE Bible College in Los Angeles, and so much closer.



September of 1962 brought us Rev. and Mrs. Allan Anderson and daughters. His mother accompanied them to Rhinelander, and we were all blessed by her musical ability along with his ministry.



In 1965, Rev. Robert and Betty Anderson and their three children, Mark, Jack, and Patti, arrived to begin almost 30 great years for our church. It is not possible to cover *all* the blessings and spiritual victories that occurred during their ministry. Thirty years *is* a long time!

### **Kingdom enhancement through people of Grace**

Our little corner of the Kingdom of God on earth continued to flourish, and the church was becoming a beacon throughout the northwoods—shining forth the message:

**“Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today and forever.”**

As God’s people radiated His love, the Word and the power of the Holy Spirit challenged saint and sinner alike. The church reached out to folks from all walks of life and all denominations, *not* to increase the size of the church, but to promulgate the message of salvation. Numbers *did*, of course, increase. The little log church on Davenport Street was full to capacity.

It was the early 1970’s. The “Neo-Pentecostal” movement, as it was called, which also spawned the advent of the “Jesus People,” had found it’s way into our region; and God was calling on us as His Church to embrace them—to nurture and disciple. Constrained by love, we were to minister the fullness of His grace; and in many instances, we *old, tradition-bound Pentecostals* were also learning anew.

How beautiful to see *God showing Himself in all His fullness* to a new generation of those hungering and thirsting for more of Him. More and more folks from other church backgrounds were becoming enlightened to the increased richness of the Christian life through the “pentecostal” experience. Some sought more of God, but felt He would have them stay in their own church; others chose to join us. Now the building was really bursting at the seams!

**Onward and *Outward***...A new vision is born...

Once more a new building seemed the only answer, but a costly one. Members and leaders alike realized we must have a property that was adaptable to yet more expansion in the future. Graciously God gave wisdom, guidance and provision. The new property located on the north side of the community, holds all the natural beauty of this glorious North Country.



Our new edifice is one of *simple* charm and elegance, a new Temple of Praise to God's Glory. With much awe and thanksgiving, we first worshipped there on Mother's Day, 1977.

### **A Golden Jubilee**

In 1982, *with jubilation*, we commemorated our Golden Jubilee: fifty years of God's grace extended—to us—in us—through us. For three days we celebrated a half-century...of the many freed from bondage...lives renewed...homes restored ...bodies healed. We celebrated the people of grace who had touched our lives, our community, and our world with the love of God. And we surely did celebrate the glorious presence of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit!

While reminiscing, we were poignantly aware that some dear faces were missing from *our* presence gone to be in the presence of the Lord. But how blessed to see the many other happy faces: friends and visitors from the past, friends of the present; even some new faces—all-aglow with the joy of grace newly discovered. And—another generation of young folks headed out to be an extension of God's love *and ours* to the whole world.

(Excerpt from Pastor Anderson's comments in the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet...*What is uppermost in our minds is being a center of ministry in this area for the glory of God, where the wayward, the needy, the oppressed can find help, and where the newborn babe and the oldest saint of God can find food for their soul. We are planning and moving in this direction and know if God's people will humble themselves and pray, that many will see and fear the Lord and will say, "THE LORD HATH DONE GREAT THINGS FOR US, WHEREOF WE ARE GLAD."*)



**God's Hand Forever Moving**—another 25 years still to come.

Soon, another of Pastor Anderson's visions began to come to fruition—the Northwoods Pastors' Conference, which ministered to the spiritual needs of pastors in the North. The larger of such conferences were too far or too expensive for those from smaller churches. They came from many places throughout the north central states. We were privileged to engage some of the very best teachers and speakers. Many of the pastors were welcomed into homes of our church family. Each day our ladies provided the very best of home cooked meals; for three days, they were loved and nurtured, body, soul and spirit. Even the best of ministries often need to step back and re-evaluate what God is saying, and in 2005, Grace hosted the last conference, *for now...*

How cyclical it is—*by His grace—He places – He removes – He replaces, as He wills. And the more grace we share, the more grace we receive, and the more He continues to apportion—according to our needs, as we seek His will.*

As the church grew by leaps and bounds, the pastoral duties became greater. We had been privileged for several years to have a number of capable, trained and dedicated couples serve part-time in pastoral support positions, as well as youth and children's leaders. Previously lay volunteers had performed these duties.

In 1991, we welcomed our assistant pastor—Rev. Bob Messerli. He came with his wife, LuAnn, and their three boys, Bobby, (as he was *then* called), Michael, and Ben. They (and we) would later welcome little Lyssa, the long-anticipated daughter. The family became a blessing, and Pastor Bob proved to be a delightful and efficient assistant pastor.

“Bob” was no stranger to many of us, as he had attended our Northwoods Pastors' Conference for a number of years. (One of his favorite conference pastimes was *harassing* the women in the kitchen who prepared the meals. He enjoyed telling us he really only came for the meals!) His sense of humor and engaging friendliness was always welcomed. He was actually involved in getting our first three pastors' conference speakers. More than once he expressed his admiration for this church body, the edifice, and especially his admiration and respect for Pastor Anderson.

In January of 1995, the time arrived that we knew would have to come someday soon. Pastor Anderson sought to resign as senior pastor, and we accepted with some difficulty. Pastor and Betty Anderson were and are, very special people; and in 29 plus years, strong attachments had been formed—many marriages, baby dedications, baptisms—so many blessings shared, so many victories won. But God had prepared a replacement. With the blessing of Pastor Anderson and the district supervisor, Pastor Bob Messerli was appointed senior pastor. At this point, Pastor Bob has already surpassed the longevity of the Evanses as pastors in Rhineland.

*(Pastor and Betty Anderson retired to their home on Jennie Weber Lake, and have continued to make this their church home. Several years ago he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. About a year ago, he could no longer be cared for at home. He is presently residing in a lovely veteran's facility in Waupaca, happy and contented. Betty is by his side much of the time, traveling between there and here. Though he can no longer sing, I'm confident that every day his heart and spirit sing his very favorite song with more assurance and anticipation than ever: "It is Well With My Soul!")*

When Pastor Bob became senior pastor, it was decided not to seek a replacement for associate pastor at that time. Instead, the leadership realized the deep need for a business administrator. Jim Marcell very capably first served in this position. When the Marcells moved away, we were privileged to engage Lee Lappin, a CPA and financial counselor by profession.

From the very beginning, one of the special gifts Pastor Bob brought to the ministry of the church was his degree and proficiency in marriage and family counseling. Never before in the history of the church of Christ has there been a greater need for this kind of ministry to Christians as well as unbelievers. Trained Christian counselors are difficult to find, so we are very blessed.

In the past 25 years, as in the first 50, we have seen the hand of God at work through the ministry of several that must be noted among pastors who, through the anointing of the Holy Spirit have left their special touch on so many in this church family: assistant pastors Henry and Janet Boynton; children's pastor, Michele Halverson; youth pastors Jack and Gayle Anderson, Greg and Karen Everson, Tyler and Charmione Marcell, and Tracy Kaye. God bless them, this *family* is eternally grateful.

### **Fulfilling past visions—exploring new ones**

Through the generosity of the people, as they were moved by the hand of God, the church mortgage had been paid off quite ahead of time. Perhaps now was the appointed time to pursue another vision: the proposed multi-purpose facility so very much needed. This prompted considerable looking back before moving ahead...so we might with much deeper humility, value past blessings, and esteem more highly the plan of God—*His* will, *His* purpose, *His* direction for the future. We were about to see an even grander experience in grace than we had imagined.



The “boys” are full-grown now: Michael graduated from college last year but thinking of further college; Ben is in college; and Bob just recently graduated from law school.



Messerli Family when they first came in 1991.



Pastor Robert and Betty Anderson



Family Life Center



Pastor Bob, LuAnn and the lovely young Lyssa who is about to be a teenager!

### **The Family Life Center—*a proper and definitive name...***

It would be a facility devised and constructed for use by **The Family**, intended to generate better, more active and productive **Life**—physically and spiritually; an edifice—**Center**, exceptionally functional, yet beautiful. It would stand just behind the church building graciously yet powerfully attesting to the glory of God.

The Family Life Center...even the planning, engineering, and logistics were a phenomenal work of art and wonderment, and grace of course. We were privileged to have one of the best as architect and construction engineer—our own Dennis Nordquist, who dedicated his time and talents to the Lord at no cost to the church. This was true of nearly every able-bodied man in the church, professional and non-professional. Almost everyday of the week would find someone busily doing what needed to get done; and most Saturdays a large crew under Denny's direction gave a full day's work. Dennis' *greatest* support during this two-year project was his wife, Helen (Fralick) Nordquist, who not only supported him, but also encouraged him often along the way, with prayer, affirmation, and love. She also served as his personal secretary on the project. For this she was greatly experienced; she was then, and for over 20 years, the church secretary. (I believe it bears honorable mention here that Dorothy Nordquist is still worshipping with us; she has been a part of the family since nearly the beginning – and she is the mother of Dennis. Also several of her other children still worship with us.)

This much used and appreciated facility was dedicated to the Lord in November 1998. Built at enormous cost by man's estimation, it is already debt-free. We are not by any means a wealthy congregation, so how can one explain such grace?

### **Steadfast and Strong**

There is, I believe, a *spiritual* parallel to be seen between this church body and the magnificent picturesque power and artistry of God's creation—one very familiar to us in the northwoods with all our grand lakes and rivers. Early on when Pastor Bob was sharing how he had long thought of this church, he said it reminded him of a great river, flowing deep and steady; that analogy struck a cord deep within me, and I would like to explore it further with you...

In your mind's eye consider—a river of great depth, flowing slowly and quietly, but steadily along its course. Because of the river's depth, one rises above the river's rocky bottom. Occasionally here and there we encounter some threatening rapids, which challenge our ability to navigate. But quickly, with the skill of a wise guide, we get safely through. This church has been much like that deep, steady river. Sudden turbulence is met with calm assurance, faith fixed firmly in Jesus, *our Leader and Guide*; we trust *His* judgment and get through safely. The waters continue to flow—deep and steady...Compare to the so-called “babbling” brook...We often watch, captivated, listening as the water ripples with cheerful noisiness over the bed of rocks just barely below the surface. It has a way of filling our senses *momentarily*. However,

it has very little depth for it is *shallow*. When exposed to any form of drought, it simply *dries up*. It seems to have very little substance in the overall scheme of things.

Rhinelanders Foursquare Church is like that deep and steady river...and much like Ezekiel's river, flowing out from the temple of God. "The river itself will grow fruit trees of all kinds. Their leaves won't wither, their fruit won't fail...the fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing." (Ezekiel 47:12 – THE MSG.)

This is God's promise to His covenant people—and *by grace*, we are included!

### **How do we define ourselves as a body?**

In 1998, with the building of the Family Life Center almost complete, after much retrospection, our leadership sensed this was the right time to propose a name change, something that had often been considered. For over sixty years, we had remained as chartered: *The Foursquare Gospel Church*. The proposal was delightfully accepted by the church membership. We would now be known, quite appropriately, as ***Grace Foursquare Church***.

**Yes! After all it was—*Grace from the Beginning!***

And so it is by divine inspiration, with gratitude for the past, unwavering faith for the future, continued commitment to God's will and the Holy Spirit's leading—***Grace Church*** will continue to be more than just a name! It defines this Body of Christ—historically and prophetically.

Two years ago in June, the Lord strengthened His promise to supply every need for our family of Grace with the much anticipated arrival of Pastor Steve Hohm, his wife Linda and their three sons: Christopher, Jordan and Michael. They immediately endeared themselves to us—just being who they are. Pastor Steve and Linda as associate pastors, lead the youth, fill in when necessary for the Messerlis, and so much more. Pastor Steve's special touch is quite appreciated. No one of us appreciates him more than Pastor Bob; they compliment one another in ministry, and we are the beneficiaries. Besides his pastoral abilities, Steve brings with him exceptional knowledge and skills in the use of computer techniques, a real plus in many areas. We have already experienced much good, and look forward to much more.



**Standing on the promises...**Past and present acts of God – through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, declare His awesome words of promise to *this* church, just one mighty arm of *His* Church. We need only to hold fast, believing in those promises, standing always on the scriptures, His living, written Word. Then we can know, we can believe: the best is yet to come!

**“God is not a man that He should lie,  
Nor a son of man that He should repent.  
Has He said and will He not do?  
Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?  
Behold I have received a *command* to bless;  
He has blessed, and I cannot reverse it.”**  
Numbers 23:19, 20 (NKJV)

**A Diamond Jubilee—Seventy-five years!**

And now, as God’s grace continues, we at Grace Church are celebrating a “Diamond Jubilee.” For seventy-five years, “*by the grace of God,*” has truly been the anthem of this church family. Grace bestowed, grace received, grace administered!

In recent years we have seen a number of new ministries added, and others strengthened to bless and encourage the family of Grace and others; we will devote a special section of *honorable mention* to those in the *Afterword* of this book.

As we take this look back, we should be more expectant than ever because of His promises... given in His Word, to the Church of Christ everywhere...and those so graciously given through Holy Spirit in prophecy directly to this local church body. I know if even a few remain faithful and believe nothing can prevent God’s hand from fulfilling ALL of His promises.

AMAZING GRACE,  
WONDERFUL, MARVELOUS, MATCHLESS GRACE.  
WHO BUT GOD CAN CONCEIVE IT?

As we pause to give praise and thanksgiving to God for His abundant blessings and spiritual victories over the past 75 years, let us fervently pray that God will give our pastors and leaders a new vision of where and how He wants to take us from here. With faith in Him, and confidence in this beautiful family of *Grace*, we look forward to the next 25 years and more, should the Lord tarry. Let us never lose sight of the past 75 years and the many manifestations of the mighty hand of God, nor the many blessed saints, now with Christ, who have paved the way. There are many in addition to those mentioned in the beginning, and throughout this story. Though I surely can’t name them all, I must add folks like Dick and Louise Bonson, Charles Belling, Alice Reinke, Freda Fralick, George and Evelyn Norton, for instance. Their lives are witnesses to us because they, like the heroes of faith in Hebrews chapter twelve, have successfully overcome... “*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress. And let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us.*” Hebrews 12:1-NLT

Should Christ tarry, and this church family mark 100 years, many more of us will have joined this “great crowd of witnesses.” But for you who remain, as you celebrate, we will be remembering with you—all that has gone before, and all that is still to come!

*Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly  
above all that we ask or think,  
according to the power that works in us,  
to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus  
to all generations,  
forever and ever. Amen.  
Ephesians 3:20-21 NKJV*

## **An After-Word:**

### **Ministries of Grace—Above and Beyond**

*“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”*

*Colossians 3:17*

**Music and worship...**I doubt that most of us have any idea the commitment, the dedication and the number of hours that go into the music ministry of the church. Each time we enter the sanctuary for Sunday morning worship and the music begins, we are reminded how blessed we are with the musicians and worship leaders under the direction of our very gifted choir and music director, Pat Doyle. In tune with the Holy Spirit, they create an atmosphere in each service in which we can bring *our* hearts and spirits in tune with God. When the choir ministers, it is an added blessing! The sound booth ministry is an enhancement of the music ministry that is extremely important for allowing our praise to God and preaching of His Word to flow smoothly.

**Grace’s Place...**Since its inception in the fall of 2000, many hands and hours of preparation have contributed to keep Grace’s kitchen open. However, we will always owe a debt of gratitude to its founder, Helen Nordquist—a woman with a vision from God...to create a place where busy families, for a very nominal donation, can gather for food and fellowship before attending our Wednesday night group meetings. We can relax and partake each week, during the school months, with “no muss-no fuss”—no cooking, cleaning and *no stress*. What better use could there be for the beautiful kitchen facilities of the FLC? The next time we partake let’s remember those who have labored faithfully with our gratitude and prayers.

**Age related Wednesday night children’s programs...**as well as Sunday Bible classes, are coordinated by our very capable Christian Education Director, Julie Wilcox. Julie became a Rhinelander transplant when she married Doug Wilcox, who was literally “born into” the family of Grace. They and their two sons are just one example of the many families who represent that strong and steadfast river that was and is Grace Church. Lisa (Wilcox) McFarland does a wonderful job coordinating the nursery for Sunday morning and Wednesday night activities. None of these ministries would exist if it weren’t for the many faithful volunteer teachers and leaders—God bless each of you!

**Summer children’s and youth camps** continue to be a strong outreach of the church. Both require much volunteer help, such as counselors, etc. Again, dedicated volunteers step up to fill the needs.

**Summer family camping...**For several years now, each year in August, dozens of families trek to Upper Michigan to Camp Bewabic, where coordinators Lloyd and Kim Gauthier has reserved a block of campsites for Grace folks. They enjoy the outdoors and one another for several days to a week, including a very moving outdoor Saturday night worship service.

**Camping extended to winter!** We are fortunate to have a wonderful Christian campground in the northwoods, Fort Wilderness, fondly called "Fort" by the locals. About ten years ago, Fort buildings became winterized, and they offer a wonderful winter camping experience. Our men first began to engage it for an annual winter Men's Retreat each January followed by February's Winter Youth Camp, and March is Women's Retreat. Plus there is often a one-day winter outing for the whole family at the Fort.

**Summer youth interns...**This program began several years back to encourage our youth and assist the youth pastor, as well as give college students planning on going into the ministry some "hands on" experience.

**A yearly summer fest day** for the whole family is **the church picnic**, held at fabulous Hodag Park on Boom Lake. Besides the great food and games, a big highlight of the picnic is water baptism. Many of us recall when summer was the *only* time one could be baptized in water. Our current building is equipped with a baptismal that has been used for and for thirty years. Nevertheless, there are usually a few hardy folks who desire the traditional lake immersion; and the church picnic provides an ideal setting, inspiring a beautifully moving service to close out a joyous day.

**Women's Bible study groups**, ongoing annually from fall through spring, and coordinated by LuAnn Messerli have become an encouragement to our ladies as well as an outreach ministry; more and more women from the community are attending these studies, initially drawn by the testimony of others who have attended.

**Men's small groups** are coordinated by Pastor Bob. Every man in the church is encouraged to become a part of a group of no more than 4 or 5 men, who meet weekly for about one hour, often at breakfast or lunch. They come together to discuss the Word, pray, and primarily minister to one another on a very personal and confidential level.

**Prayer chain...**An almost immediate source of several people praying for your need is at your fingertips, as you phone the first contact person, who immediately passes it on. And now in the technical world that we live in, it is also passed on by email. We are thankful for JoAnne Markee and Jean Priebe who have served as faithful contact people.

**Missions...** This church body has always had a vision for missions; the giving steadily grew over the years to amazing proportions for a church this size. Faithfulness to missions is undoubtedly a factor in the way God continues to bless us. At present Grace contributes to the support of several missionaries, one very dear to our heart—our own Brennan Doyle and his young family in Guatemala. Missions trips going out from this church have increased in recent years—Pastor Bob has led trips to Guatemala, and Pastor Steve to Nicaragua. As great a blessing as it is to the people there, it seems to have been life changing for those who went.

A heart for missions will always remind us of Bill and Edna Peckous, long-time missions secretaries; who encouraged us with the importance of faithfulness in prayer as well as giving. How we miss them.



**Prison ministry at Oneida County Jail and McNaughton State Camp** is under the leadership of Bruce and Vickie Olson. Several others are also involved in leading the inmates in weekly Bible studies. The Olsons encourage the body to become involved in several annual outreach activities, showing prisoners the love of God first hand. For a number of years the choir has gone to the facility to present the Christmas Cantata—and lives are always touched for God.

**Grace Lines, a bi-monthly church newsletter,** is mailed right to your door. It puts all the above together in one report, or as much as possible, keeping the body in touch with one another and the church activities. Each issue has some timely and beneficial encouragement from the pastor's column and the Barnabus Factor, along with other interesting comments from here and there. Included are what every good publication always features—recipes! It is put together by secretary, Mary Langlois, and edited by Joan Nelson, who also graciously served as editor of this History Booklet.

**Other outreach ministries,** not often considered, still we all benefit because God is glorified through each one. Crown Financial Ministries, led by Lee Lappin and Pat McFarland, offers small group studies as well as one-on-one budget counseling to equip people to apply God's financial principles. Servants of Grace—provides help in moving, and small odd jobs around the home to those who are not physically able. Monthly staffing at the Community Food Pantry and the annual Ron Montezon Blood Drive meet an important need in the community. Then there are the many individuals, whose one-on-one ministry for the Lord are ongoing and ultimately bless the whole.

**Vital ministries to Grace...** No church is complete nor effective without the dedicated men and women of God who serve in the position of church elders and council

members. Those serving currently are as follows: Elders (Adult Servant Leaders)—Chuck Bonson, John Bonson, Jon Langlois, Steve Nelson, and Bill Priebe. Council Members—Jack Antonuk, Kim Gauthier, Kurt Klemm, Pat McFarland, Dennis Nordquist, Jim Sebestyen.

We are grateful for those past and present whom serve “as unto the Lord.”

There are so many ministries within the church that help to keep it running smoothly, it will be impossible to name them all; in trying, I’m sure I will omit some which should be included, e.g.- funeral meals, meals for the ill, keeping the kitchen stocked, communion prep, ushering, library, visitation, Sunday greeters, sporting activities, Christmas luminaries, and on and on...even all who sit in a pew on Sunday and reach out with a smile and a hand of friendship—all are vital to the complete ministry of this church. Thanks and gratitude goes to all, without them the Lord’s work could not have flourished as it has for 75 years. Only God has the complete list, and names them under “good and faithful servants.”

**Building staff...** We have been blessed with dedicated staff to care for our buildings. Fanny and Birger Strand cleaned for about 3 years. Then their son and daughter-in-law, Tina and Perry Strand, took over for 20 years. Paul Brendimihl is now head of maintenance for both buildings. Julie Wilcox is custodian of the church building and Nancy and George Schroepfer take care of the FLC.

**Office staff...** The old cliché, “last but not least,” is very apropos here, a ministry as vast as Grace would become fragmented without an efficient office staff. Ours is secretary, Mary Langlois and Sondra (Sonny) Scheffer, financial secretary. Both deserve a vote of confidence and gratitude. There are good, skilled secretaries, and then there are good *church secretaries*—Mary is both! This job requires more than schooling or experience; it is an affair of the heart, taught and re-taught by the Holy Spirit. Devotion to the Lord’s work is top priority. We have been fortunate through the years, as God has continued to provide just such persons when needed: Judy Roberts (volunteer), Helen Nordquist, Barb Antonuk, Naomi Webb, and Nancy Melau. Praise God for each of them!

Listed here is hopefully *all* the *pastoral leadership*, in chronological order. In our perpetual prayer of thanksgiving, let us remember all of them.

**Senior Pastors:**

Betty Bradigan

Catherine Hendrickson

The Wm. Stovals

The G. Grants

The Ed Sorensens

The H. Guilliams

The O. R. Streepes

The M. R. Evans

The L. Charters

The Robinsons

The L. Browns

The F. Browns

The H. Rosenbergers

The A. Andersons

The R. Andersons

The R. Messerlis

**Associate Pastors:**

Jeff Tjader  
Henry Boynton\*  
Robert Messerli  
Steve Hohm

**Youth and/or Children's Pastors:**

Linda (Mrs. Jeff) Tjader	Rick and Ronna Gerber
Jim and Carol Roberts*	Michele Halverson
Jack and Gayle Anderson*	Tracy Kaye
Greg and Karen Everson*	Steve and Linda Hohm
Tyler and Charmione Marcell*	

\*Indicates who have been our own "kids," who after graduating returned for a season to minister in their home church, much to our delight!

We sincerely hope you have enjoyed our excursion into the past 75 years. We hope you've been a part of the weekend of celebration, as we have taken a look back. Now we look forward to whatever God has in the days ahead, determined to continue in His love with *overcoming faith!*

*"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith." I John 5:4 NKJV*

*To God Be the Glory!*

## Letter From Our Senior Pastor

The Family of Grace,

Just as people have their own unique personality I believe every church has its own unique personality. Each person has a blend of inherited traits and God given gifts that make them different from others. I believe the same of the church.

People have many things in common as well. Physically we each have the same internal organs and outer features. Churches share similar qualities as well but there are inner invisible qualities that define us and make us uniquely special. Our 75th anniversary is a time to celebrate our special uniqueness and pass on our story to future generations.

Psalm 78:1-8 1 A psalm of Asaph. “O my people listen to my teaching. Open your ears to what I am saying, for I will speak to you in a parable. I will teach you hidden lessons from our past – stories we have heard and know, stories our ancestors handed down to us. We will not hide these truths from our children but will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the LORD. We will tell of his power and the mighty miracles he did. For he issued his decree to Jacob; he gave his law to Israel. He commanded our ancestors to teach them to their children, so the next generation might know them – even the children not yet born – that they in turn might teach their children. So each generation can set its hope anew on God, remembering his glorious miracles and obeying his commands.”

On this wonderful occasion of our 75th church anniversary, we are provided with a perfect opportunity to celebrate the past and embrace the future.

The Bible definition of “family” includes our extended family over three to four generations. The family then refers to our great-grandparents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, along with mom, dad, brothers and sisters. Peter Scazzero comments, “While we are affected by powerful external events and circumstances through our earthly lives, our families are the most powerful group to which we will ever belong. Even those who left home as young adults, determined to “break” from their family histories, soon find that their family’s way of “doing” life follows them wherever they go.”

The Church is described as a family with God as our Father and relationships defined by brother and sister throughout the New Testament. The Church, being the family of God, functions best when living by family principles given in the scriptures. Grace Foursquare Church is a family of believers in Jesus Christ that includes not only the present family members but also the past members as well. What happens in one generation is often repeated in future generations. Thankfully, this dynamic includes good and healthy traits not just the bad!

I recently talked to my mom about the kind of marriages my great-grandparents had. I am shaped and influenced today by the decisions and choices my great-grandparents made. What kind of people were they? How did they interact? What were my granddad’s strong

and weak points? I caught mom at a good time to talk and I took many notes! It was very interesting that she pointed out similarities between my grandfathers and me that I never knew. The Grace Foursquare Church family includes people that you may not know anything about. Learning about our families and learning about our church family is helpful in growing to be more and more like Jesus. We can identify and celebrate our unique qualities. Every family and church family has a heritage.

I have noticed that Grace Foursquare Church has a history of concern for Missions, an emphasis on reaching children and teens, a concern for the hurting, a love for pastors, many young people entering ministry, outreach to prisoners, a quality of steadiness in storms and a commitment to the Word of God and the Worship of God. Our church sign that stood for years just outside of town used the words “love, acceptance and forgiveness” as something people could find in our church family as we followed Jesus Christ. Grace is another word that I have seen in action time and time again as people reach out to people. Pastor Anderson said often, “If we err, let us err on the side of grace.” Caring for each other is a family trait I have also observed and there are many more.



Where do these qualities come from? The answer is two-fold: 1. Jesus has put them in his capital “C” Church as well as unique characteristic in small “c” churches like Grace Foursquare Church. 2. Our spiritual great-grandparents and grandparents have also sown these qualities into our church. The warmth I feel as we gather in the presence of God is not there by accident. Jesus always promises to be present as we gather in His Name but His presence is often stifled by criticism and unforgiveness among his people. I thank God for the strong position of love I have seen members of our church family take when it would be easy to give in to small petty attitudes. Who knows about the private and unknown reconciliations that have taken place between church family members through the years?

When I think about the strong qualities in our church I am fully aware that we have our blemishes as well. We always need to grow and be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, we praise God for our heritage, the saints who have gone before, and the values they have given to us. Praise God for the future and the ministry that we will have to many more people who need our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! We are knit together, woven by the love of Jesus! Our future is bright as we consider these words from Ephesians 5: 25-27 “...Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.”

*Pastor Bob*