



A Profile of Grace Episcopal Church
Diocese of Eau Claire
Rice Lake, Wisconsin

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Grace Church Today

Grace Church is a community of believers who seek to grow in God's grace and in our ability to share our experiences. We demonstrate our love of God most visibly by caring for, supporting and encouraging each other. Our parish looks forward to the future with great faith and hope. It is our goal to grow in spirit and in number. We are ambitious people who believe opportunities for sharing our faith and resources are limitless with the help of God.

Grace Church in Rice lake is the Episcopal presence in Barron County in Northwest Wisconsin. Our mission is to be "a church committed to God and dedicated to providing spiritual fulfillment for all who seek it." Our worship services are traditional, but the congregation is open to other modes. We are a small parish, and most congregants have taken on various missions and duties in worship services and provide leadership in other activities. Our church facilities are physically accessible to all. Our services are live-streamed on the internet so that people can participate in their homes, and our lay eucharistic visitors ensure that those unable to attend services are included in our communion. Coffee hour after church is a time for convivial fellowship and periodic educational programs.

Members of the congregation have been very active in diocesan activities over the decades, including members on the Standing Committee, Executive Council and Commission on Ministry. A member has long served as the diocesan Chancellor, and members have been delegates or alternates to General Convention.

Like many protestant churches in the upper Midwest, Grace Church has seen a decrease in membership. To prepare for the future, the congregation has participated in the efforts in the diocese to reduce costs to a manageable level, becoming part of the four church Northern Highlands Benefice. The Benefice provides an administrative structure to support a full-time Rector providing ministry for the churches of the Benefice with the assistance of 2 Deacons and part-time clergy. The building is in excellent condition and it will not need expensive repairs for the foreseeable future.

We seek leadership for our parish, both from our priest and our congregants, that is spiritually grounded, energetic and joyful. We hope that our priest will embrace pastoral care with love and compassion, be able to discern the spiritual needs of the parish, and encourage congregants to identify their particular gifts and dedicate them to service. The ability to teach and preach clearly and succinctly at the lay-person's level as well as a sense of humor are greatly to be desired.

Worship

Our common worship is founded in the beauty and dignity of the Anglo-Catholic tradition. Our liturgy is faithful to the Book of Common Prayer. We celebrate the Holy Eucharist every Sunday at Grace as well as additional special service opportunities for feast and saints' days in cooperation with The Northern Highlands Benefice. Our worship provides a variety of opportunities for lay participation. We have a dedicated core of lay people who are deeply dedicated to our church and ministry. We appreciate music in our worship and want to explore opportunities to glorify God through musical expression.

We have used both Rite I and Rite II. The Northern Highlands Benefice service schedule has one priest or deacon providing services to Ascension in Hayward and St. Luke's in Springbrook and the other priest or deacon providing services to St. Albans in Spooner and Grace Church in Rice Lake every Sunday. We will therefore be coordinating which Rite and track to use for our services with St. Albans.

Christian Education

We have facilities for youth education, however there are currently no school age children in the congregation. We do however have adult education opportunities which are well received and much desired by our congregation. These include in person presentations during coffee hour by members of our congregation. There are also adult education opportunities, both in-person and using video conferencing software, in coordination with the other churches in the Northern Highlands Benefice, including Advent Studies, Lenten Studies, the Good Book Club readings, and Alpha Online. We have a church website to provide information on these opportunities as well as church service information, church contacts etc. as well as information on the Northern Highlands Benefice Facebook page.

Outreach

The people of Grace Church are committed to having a presence in the Rice Lake community and recognize outreach as an important part of our Christianity. We participate, financially, and with volunteers, in the Association of Churches for Emergency Outreach (ACEO), a local ecumenical group of fourteen congregations that responds to individuals' requests for emergency financial assistance. The church hosts weekly meetings of multiple groups from Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and Crystal Meth. The local chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness shares an office in our building, and the local chapter of PEO, a philanthropic educational organization for women, meet in the parish hall. The church sponsors a room in the local homeless shelter, Benjamin's House. A portion of our Christmas offering is designated for a local non-profit organization.

Parish Life and Pastoral Care

Grace Church proudly proclaims its identity as a welcoming, friendly congregation. In our most recent parish survey many responded that they feel like we are a family. We care for one another in times of joy and times of need. It is our desire to extend the joy of Christ's love beyond the walls of Grace into the community at large.

Members of Grace experience an active and inclusive parish life. A coffee hour after the Sunday service is always well attended and a wonderful opportunity for fellowship. All of our congregants play a role in our outreach activities and many are members of service clubs as well as serving in leadership positions on local foundation boards and other organizations in our communities. Parish work days are organized occasionally during the year to take care of needed cleaning and repairs to our church home.

Our branch of the ECW is a loosely organized group of dedicated women blessed with a wealth of creativity and energy. They engage in projects like organizing luncheons.

Vestry members are sensitive to the need for open lines of communication within our parish family. We recently completed a parish survey to identify the beliefs, needs and desires of our church members for all aspects of our church life and the direction of our church in the future. Members take leadership roles in specific areas of our parish life and service. This practice has helped to encourage sharing of ideas, time and talent to the glory of God.

The size of our parish family belies our impact in the community. God has blessed us with hard-working, skillful leaders who recognize the contribution of each person as important to the success of our parish and community projects. Grace Church members are informed and interested in matters of the Episcopal Church beyond our parish. Persons serve, and have served in various capacities within the Diocese and we participate at diocesan events. In 2018 Grace church held the annual Diocesan Convention.

History of Grace Church

Grace Church is one of the oldest churches in our community. The first Episcopal services were held in Rice Lake on March 23, 1879, when the Rev. P.B. Morrison came up from Eau Claire. Grace Mission was organized on May 24, 1881, and the first services were held in the new church building on June 3, 1884. Grace Church was incorporated under the laws of the

State of Wisconsin on August 12, 1884. The present church building was dedicated by the Rt. Rev. William W. Horstick, second bishop of Eau Claire, on April 12, 1953.

For a number of years Grace Church was yoked with St. Mark's, a mission church located in the neighboring community of Barron. Due to declining membership at St. Mark's, in the early 1990's, the decision was made to merge this mission with Grace Church. Following the joining of these faith communities, the parish house was renovated to make room for St. Mark's Chapel. Furnishings and stained-glass windows were moved from St. Mark's Church to maintain its history and identity.

Community History

Rice Lake is located in the Northwoods, about 48 miles northwest of Chippewa Falls, in Barron County. The Chippewa and other American Indian groups called the area home, trapping and gathering wild rice in the lakes and bogs until the 1880s. Very recently, four sculptures were commissioned and placed along the shoreline of Rice Lake, depicting more about the area's history, especially its roots with the indigenous people who first called the place home.

Around 1867, John Knapp bought acres of forest in the area that became part of property owned by the largest lumbering company in the world, Knapp, Stout & Co. The firm owned 115,000 acres and produced 90 million feet of cut lumber annually by 1880. By damming the Red Cedar River around 1870, the company created a lake for use as a holding pond. It also flooded the wild rice beds, which angered the Chippewa. To make amends, the lumber company agreed to bring them food, replacing their wild rice diet with one containing pork and flour.

The village was platted in 1870, 1875 and 1884 by Knapp, Stout & Co. They left a 100-foot wide thoroughfare that continues to be Rice Lake's downtown business district. In 1887, a municipal charter for the city of Rice Lake was passed by the State Legislature.

Today, the Rice Lake School District offers endless opportunities in a safe and welcoming learning environment. And the city is proud to be the home for post-secondary educational opportunities at the Northwoods Technical College and UW-Eau Claire-Barron County campuses in the city. The Technical College had its beginnings here in 1940. And the University campus, which began as the Barron County Normal School in 1907, is now a member of the UW System

Community Profile

Grace Church is located in Rice Lake, Barron County, WI. The city is beautiful and thriving. Its population is around 9,000. Rice Lake is a focal point of commerce, agriculture, education, medical services, tourism, and recreation in northwestern WI. With a mayor and council form of government, Rice Lake offers a full range of municipal services. Rice Lake serves a primary retail trade area of approximately a 50-mile radius. It is the largest community between Eau Claire, 60 miles to the south, and Superior, 100 miles to the north. It is just 100 miles northeast of the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area and a major airport. Our

city has national retail chain stores, and a number of local retailers. Cedar Mall has two anchors and many smaller stores.

This part of WI is famous for fishing, hunting, and sports, as well as being a popular summer resort area. Hiking, bicycling, cross country skiing, and snowmobile and ATV trails are maintained here. There are a number of fine golf courses, including Turtleback, a premier golf and event center. Winter recreation includes Christie Mountain Ski Area. The Rice Lake Pool serves adults and youth year-round; and plans are underway for future expansion.

A full range of medical services is available in Rice Lake. The Marshfield Medical Center provides inpatient, outpatient, emergency and clinic care. The Mayo Health System-Northland, the Prevea Rice Lake Health Center, and a VA Clinic are also located in the city.

We have a solid educational system, and encourage and support youth activities. The Chamber of Commerce, service and non-profit organizations, and churches are very active providing services to people of all ages.

Rice Lake is a city surrounded by fertile farmland yielding an abundance of milk, poultry, corn, potatoes, honey, maple syrup, hay and vegetables. In summer and fall, many of these products are available at local farmers markets. The Barron County Fair is held in July at the fairgrounds, located in the city. This annual event is a venue for vendors and exhibitors to showcase their products, talents, and achievements, and is especially important in the life of youth organizations in our community. Within the city, a remarkable industrial diversity flourishes: produced here are, among other things, reprocessed plastic, truck bodies, builder's hardware, precision scale parts, kitchen cabinets, and food products. For more information please consult the below web-sites:

<https://www.ci.rice-lake.wi.us>

<https://barron.uwec.edu>

<https://www.northwoodtech.edu>

<https://www.barroncountywi.gov>

<https://ricelakechamber.org>

<http://www.ricelake.k12.wi.us>

Our New Rector

We pray for a rector who is confident and secure, both personally and professionally, who can provide leadership to move our parish forward with an eye on growth. He should have organized administrative abilities and be technologically skilled. It is important that a Rector be

willing to work with the personality of our congregation and lead us into new ways of expressing our spirituality. We seek preaching and instruction that is organized, intellectual, and based upon a solid foundation in scripture, history, liturgy, and theology.

Pastoral care is one of the most important functions, benefits, and responsibilities of membership in our congregation. Our Rector must provide leadership to our congregation in ministering to shut-ins and people in need of pastoral care beyond the walls of Grace Church. A Rector who relates well to all ages with compassion, enthusiasm and humor will complement our parish family and be welcomed in our community.

We believe the person responding to God's call will recognize the need to become an active participant in a loving parish family. We look forward to sharing our love of God and each other with our new Rector.

The Church Building











