

ANNUAL REPORT

2017



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

In 2017, Lutherans around the world observed the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. As the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we are called to foster unity within the church and to live into God's calling together in the years ahead. Through our more than 3.7 million members and friends, we will continue to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ crucified and risen for the life of the world.

We are church together, united by a common vision.

A world experiencing the difference God's grace and love in Christ makes for all people and creation.

We are church for the sake of the world, united by a common purpose.

Together in Jesus Christ, we are freed by grace to live faithfully, witness boldly and serve joyfully.

As we strive to live into this vision and purpose, we face many challenges. In a radically individualistic society, we seek to create and sustain life-giving relationships and communities that connect us to God and one another. In a society that is becoming increasingly secular while facing many tensions, we seek to proclaim the gospel and share the story of Jesus as a source of hope, inclusion, peace and reconciliation. And, in a world that misuses power and authority while struggling with growing inequality, we seek to follow Jesus who spoke publicly for those who were oppressed and marginalized.

As your church family gathers to make decisions about using the gifts God has entrusted to you, may you remember that by the tender love of God, by the ceaseless pursuit of the Spirit, we are members of the body of Christ. We are family. We share our lives. We love each other. By the reconciling expression of God's grace, we can live confidently and generously in this community of faith and in service of others because we are joined in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Living together in community with Christ,



The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord, and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7





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Grace Lutheran Church Congregational Council

Term expires <u>February 2018</u>	Term expires <u>February 2019</u>	Term expires <u>February 2020</u>
Brad Lint	David Gronert	Bruce Bergman
Jay Wangerin	Matt Jordahl	Don Peterson
Lori Fry	John Roehrick	Cheryl Weatherington
Mary Jo McCleary	Sally Preston	Barb Zimany

2017 Executive Committee

John Roehrick
Jay Wangerin
Dave Gronert
Barb Zimany

Congregational Officers

President	John Roehrick
Vice President	Jay Wangerin
Secretary	Dave Gronert
Treasurer	Tom Selander
Financial Secretary	Paul Kallenbach

Grace Lutheran Church Staff

Pastor
The Rev. Michael Jon Schmidt

2017 Grace Staff Members

(in alphabetical order)

Kathy Bowermaster, Accompanist
Jessica Flannery, Office Assistant for Worship
Denise Friesth, Minister for Administration
Todd Haugen, Custodian
Brooke Howsare, Director of Grace Kids Care
Ellen Rothweiler, Minister for Youth and Family Ministry
Rich Snyder, Organist
Emma Stammer, Minister for Worship and Music
Michelle Voelker, Minister for Communication

Membership Statistics

	<u>Baptized</u> 706	<u>Confirmed</u> 604
Membership end of 2016 as reported in the Congregational Report to the ELCA		
Members removed during 2017		
by death	10	10
by transfer to other congregations or other reasons	3	3
Members received during 2017		
by baptism	5	
by transfer fr other congregations by affirmation of faith	8	5
baptized youth confirmed in 2017		6
Membership end of 2017	706	602

Statistical Report

Worship Services Conducted.....	114
Weddings held at Grace.....	6
Baptisms – Members (Youth).	5
Baptisms – Non-members.....	0
Member Funerals held at Grace.....	10
Average Sunday worship attendance 2002...	416
Average Sunday worship attendance 2003...	385
Average Sunday worship attendance 2004...	368
Average Sunday worship attendance 2005...	333
Average Sunday worship attendance 2006...	324
Average Sunday worship attendance 2007...	294
Average Sunday worship attendance 2008...	293
Average Sunday worship attendance 2009...	259
Average Sunday worship attendance 2010....	228
Average Sunday worship attendance 2011....	229
Average Sunday worship attendance 2012....	212
Average Sunday worship attendance 2013....	197
Average Sunday worship attendance 2014....	197
Average Sunday worship attendance 2015....	191
Average Sunday worship attendance 2016....	178
Average Sunday worship attendance 2017....	167

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Jan	408	404	373	355	341	291	305	250	256	245	215	181	194	185	153	159
Feb	392	359	354	305	307	242	314	281	252	212	216	231	199	197	183	172
Mar	493	377	388	402	299	315	389	280	263	259	230	264	188	205	255	157
Apr	433	507	470	326	399	379	324	342	300	347	289	224	268	270	191	237
May	415	363	385	334	336	306	270	250	236	216	219	190	190	166	185	157
Jun	414	353	340	295	312	299	251	218	187	195	198	156	167	166	150	153
July	360	349	293	296	277	272	242	192	169	199	174	159	164	149	141	128
Aug	385	332	313	297	277	252	260	245	155	196	188	165	170	162	153	130
Sept	457	397	376	333	292	298	263	245	219	206	181	165	196	187	178	151
Oct	404	428	439	398	341	299	321	266	247	225	215	209	213	203	175	165
Nov	422	382	360	326	309	307	302	291	235	237	211	241	206	205	184	168
Dec	412	380	319	319	394	265	269	238	206	210	208	176	198	197	202	229

In Memorandum

**We remember with love and respect
the following loved ones who from their labors rest.
Listed are their names and the date of death.**

Marlin (Moe) Nielsen	March 6, 2017
Jeanette Ziesman	March 6, 2017
Ardis Olson	March 13, 2017
Mary Johansen	May 4, 2017
Ardis Schmelzer	May 9, 2017
Einar Christianson	June 12, 2017
Jack Donnenwerth	June 25, 2017
Betty Hirschauer	August 19, 2017
Dorothy Duleepsingh	September 23, 2017
Bonna Oldson	October 27, 2017

**Grace Lutheran Church
Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes
January 22, 2017**

The meeting was called to order at 12:20 p.m. by Congregational President, Brad Lint.

Pastor Mike Schmidt led the assembly in a devotion using the litany in the Annual Report, prayer and a reflection on the Bible story of the paralytic, as expressed in our commissioned art piece painted by Paul Oman on Celebration Sunday 2016. This piece shows what it is to be the body of Christ in the world; that something special happens here, where we make Christ known to each other.

The agenda was adopted as printed and statistical reports were reviewed. We rejoiced in our newest additions and remembered eleven beloved members who have died in the past year. Minutes from the 2016 Annual Congregational Meeting were approved as written. Brad Lint gave the President's report, followed by Pastor Mike's report. They highlighted joys and concerns that we have encountered this year and looked forward to the 90th Anniversary celebration we are planning for June 11, 2017. They called attention to the ongoing work of the Malmin Fund task force and Grace 2020 team, as well as the viable changes in staffing we have been blessed with, in spite of the significant loss we suffered with the passing of Jackie Holmes.

Kevin Drury, chair of Grace 2020, reported progress on developing a new mission statement, articulating our congregational values and defining measurable goals around our most important themes: Worship, Education, Outreach, Finance, and Well-Being. Pastor Mike highlighted and thanked our staff for their exceptional work. The staff reports were accepted as written.

Council elections were held for five positions. Four open three-year terms were filled by Barb Zimany and Don Peterson by re-election, and Bruce Bergman, and Cheryl Weatherington as new council members. The fifth term is one that remained open from the previous year. It was filled by Sally Preston. She has agreed to serve one year in this position.

An Endowment committee member election was held, resulting in the election of John Justice to a three-year term.

Committee reports were accepted with no additions.

Finance reports from 2016 were presented by Kevin Krause, showing that an overall deficit of \$7,176 was incurred. This was the result of offerings that were above or below budgeted projections, staffing changes involving four positions throughout the year, and needed property repairs and enhancements. These reports were accepted.

The proposed 2017 budget reflected an operation deficit largely due to a decrease in pledges with a full staff and operational costs continuing about the same. Discussion included options to create a balanced budget by having a fundraising drive, communicating to all members the need to increase pledges by 7%, or reducing staff positions or benevolence. Congregation members expressed confidence in the congregation's ability to make up the deficit and concern about going forward with a deficit budget. A motion to adopt the budget as presented passed unanimously. A further motion was passed to ask the council, the stewardship committee and the finance committee to look at ways to balance the 2017 budget within the next 60 to 90 days. This will be reported to the

congregation. It was also presented that the congregation will need to begin to retire its debt to the Endowment fund beginning in 2018.

The Grace Kids Care 2016 finances were presented and show a third year of losses. A 2017 breakeven budget was presented, but there is concern that unless significant steps are taken to increase revenues and/or reduce expenses, it may not be achievable. The Office Administrator will take a greater role in management of daycare finances in 2017 to assist the daycare staff in achieving these goals.

Grace 2020 Chair, Kevin Drury presented new questions for the congregation to consider on the topics of Education and Outreach. Congregational responses to previous questions were posted in Grace Hall.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m. with The Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Barks, Congregational Secretary

Report from the Congregational Council President

Dear Friends in Christ:

Another year has passed and as we look back at the events and occurrences at Grace, we find a family of faith and commitment. 2017 saw the celebration of 90 years as a congregation as well as the unveiling of the 2020 report and its five pillars. We now move forward with the implementation. Grace Kids Care restructured following the resignation of Heather Nelson, its long-time director. The strength and commitment of the congregation was shown when the call went out for re-visiting our pledge offerings.

Not only did the congregation respond, but with cymbals loudly clanging. Because of your renewed commitment, Grace was able to end the year with a surplus. Bring your hands together in celebration of that feat.

As we look back at 2017 and thank God for His blessings, we must also look forward. The combining of worship services into one will allow us to gain synergy as we renew friendships and meet other members of our family of faith. One service will also serve to make our musical participation more vibrant and meaningful. Yet, we must remember that we have to continue to reach out to our neighborhood and community to bring in new and active members. Such is necessary for the renewal of faith and continued vitality of the congregation.

Additionally, continued financial commitment is a necessity for vibrancy and vitality. To continue with our programs and staff we will have to expand our financial resources and giving. While the gift from Marvin Malmin has permitted us to maintain our facilities and reduce capital indebtedness, it was not and is not intended for expenditures on budgetary items. Thus, in the coming year it is hoped that we can shift our Stewardship to early fall at the beginning of the programmatic year and with prayer and God's continued grace we will find a firmer financial footing for the continuation of programs and staff.

In conclusion, we must also be thankful for the leadership of Pastor Mike and our dedicated staff – Kathy Bowermaster, Jessica Flannery, Denise Friesth, Todd Haugen, Brooke Howsare, Ellen Rothweiller, Rich Snyder, Emma Stammer, and Michelle Voelker. They are God's blessing to us. Thank each of them for their service and dedication. May 2018 be a continued year of blessing for our congregation here at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church.

John P. Roehrick
Congregational President

Pastor's Report 2017

"The church is the church only when it exists for others."

Rev. Dr. Dietrich Bonhoeffer

"I must tell you, as a Christian, I do not believe in death without resurrection."

Arch-Bishop, Oscar Romero

"An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity."

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Thank you all for making 2017 such a strong year at Grace Lutheran Church. It truly feels as though 2017 was a pivotal year in the life of God's ministry in this place. The work of the Grace 2020 Team is starting to come into view and will continue to take shape this coming year.

I have reflected a lot recently about this past year, especially compared to my first year here at Grace. In my annual report for 2011, I reflected on the quotes listed above. This was in response to many stating that we are a "dying church." Having been through the grieving process of a church closure, I reacted quite strongly to this claim with the proclamation that we are not a dying church. This is true. We are not a dying church.

We are an incredibly strong and gifted community of faith, something that was shown this last year. We saw a swing in finances, moving from a projected \$26,000 deficit to a \$29,800 surplus. We celebrated 90 years of ministry as Grace Lutheran Church with prior leaders and Bishop Michael Burk present. We were re-branded with a logo that represents our being woven together in Christ. The Grace 2020 Team laid forward our 2020 Vision and continues work toward those goals. It was indeed a pivotal year here at Grace. We are a thriving church.

Since 2011, I have learned that for us to be the church that we are called to be, there will have to be changes to the way that we engage in ministry. For many, change can feel like a death. As the way we do things changes, it can feel like part of what was Grace Lutheran Church has died. Change is difficult, and not without grief. With that realization, I find that the opposite is also true. We are a dying church.

In our work together, we are a church that has taken off the blinders and learned what it means to *guide people to live differently through Christ*. This means a focus moving forward on the main "pillars" of ministry: Worship, Education, Outreach, Well Being, and Finance. It will mean a focus on our core values of Discipleship, Community, Acceptance, and Prayer. We are becoming a resurrected church. Some of the changes may feel like death, but we do not believe in death without resurrection. There is a future in store for us. We are becoming a resurrected church.

As I look around on Sunday mornings and see all of us gathered together, I feel a sense of energy that is life giving. It is easy to see the sense of community that is developing. There is a vibrancy in worship as we gather around word and sacrament, centering ourselves in worship. It truly feels like there are great things ahead for us here at Grace Lutheran Church. We are an awakened church.

I look forward to the privilege of serving as your pastor this coming year, and God willing, for many years to come. This may well be the year it all changes and we look back and say that 2018 is the year that we became a growing church.






In Christ,
Pastor Mike

Report from the 2020 Committee

After dozens of planning sessions beginning in June 2016, the 2020 committee was able to establish a base upon which to build the Vision for the future. Once this base was established, the committee, working with church staff persons, began to piece together the “nuts and bolts” of the Vision process.

At the Anniversary Celebration the committee rolled out a **new mission statement** for Grace Lutheran Church and presented the five pillars upon which Vision 2020 will be built. Our new Statement of Mission is: **Grace Lutheran Church is a community of faith, centered in worship, held in grace, strengthened in love, sent forth in mission, in Jesus’ name.**

The pillars are:

-  Worship
-  Education
-  Well-Being
-  Finance
-  Outreach

Each pillar had a member of the committee assigned to help lead its development. Members of the congregation were recruited to serve on subcommittees, one for each pillar.

Several initiatives have been developed so far, due to the hard work of the subcommittees and the church staff members. Some of the initiatives are as follows:

- Adopting and launching the PushPay online giving application to provide more options for members to contribute to special appeals and manage pledged offerings.
- Comprehensive review and evaluation of Christian Education from Frolic on up to Adult Christian Education.
- Well-Being presentations during the Adult Education Hour.
- Rescheduling of the Worship Service and Education hours, bringing the Congregation together to increase participation and energy during the entire Sunday experience at Grace.
- Preliminary planning to better coordinate Outreach in order to provide more opportunities to serve our members and the community outside of our congregation.
- Participating in the development of our new website (launch scheduled for January 15, 2018).
- Development of pillar icons to enable members to readily identify announcements and notices pertaining to the Vision 2020 pillars.
- Participation in selecting Grace Lutheran Church’s new logo.

- Working with the Property Committee to revamp the Gathering Hall to make it a more welcoming space.

The 2020 Committee views these preliminary initiatives as **waypoints** along this journey we are taking together to evaluate and improve all aspects of Christian life at Grace Lutheran Church. We believe that the goals we establish and strive to accomplish by the year 2020 ultimately will be just the beginning of a continuing process of envisioning, evaluating, experimenting, and implementing ideas for the betterment of the physical, mental, and spiritual health of our congregation and the community around us.

The Grace 2020 Committee: Pastor Mike (Worship), Kevin Drury (Finance), Dave Gronert (Outreach), Tracy Justice (Education), and Loree Nelson (Well-Being)

Annual Report 2017 – Worship & Music Ministry

2017 has been a year of growth and change for music and worship at Grace. Highlights include:

- Grace's 90th anniversary celebration, with guest Paul Oman, special sanctuary décor, and a photo history of the church in Grace Hall.
- The transition of Chancel Choir and Grace Bells into the former Esperanza Chapel as a new rehearsal space. Thanks to all the groups who helped renovate & paint!
- The addition of Jessye Flannery to the church staff as worship assistant, and Brooke Howsare as Grace Kids Care director.
- *Grace Players* production of Super Hero Sanitarium in September.
- God's Work, Our Hands Sunday on Sept. 10.
- A worship volunteer training event in October.
- Reformation 500 celebrations.
- The Sunday School Christmas program, led by Steph Shepard.
- The annual Bells & Brass concert and Chancel Choir Christmas cantata.
- The lovely festival of trees and altar decorations during the Advent and Christmas seasons.
- A full sanctuary on Christmas Eve.

As approved by the Malmin Task Force and Council, funds from the Malmin memorial have been allocated to hire singers for the Chancel Choir. So far, a Soprano has been singing with us, and has been a wonderful addition. A Tenor has been hired starting in January 2018, and I'm still advertising for other voice parts.

As we move forward in 2018 to a combined worship service I am very excited to see renewed energy in our community of faith. I look forward to seeing God's grace work in our lives in the new year!

*Yours in Christ,
Emma Stammer, minister for worship & music*

Report from the Director of Grace Kids Care

Brooke Howsare

Hello, 2017 was a big transition year for Grace Kids Care. We began the year off with a lot of financial questions. During the summer we saw light at the end of the tunnel and began to show a profit. With enrollment being down since August we are not seeing such high surpluses as before, but we are keeping a better record of the financials. We have been closely watching our income and expenses and are in the processing of finalizing the budget. For 2018, I want to keep better records of the financials and have more detail on where funds are being allocated and how we can operate more efficiently and effectively.

This year we found that many of our wonderful teachers are not receiving health care. We are considering group plans to help our teachers receive healthcare and are hoping this will be in effect in 2018! We currently have two staff members, Jackie and Paige, who are in the TEACH program with DMACC and are obtaining their AA in Early Childhood Education. We are thrilled to have so many of our teachers excited about going back to school and earning their degrees. We have 2 more teachers who are interested in the program and are hopeful that we can have them continue their education or start the process in 2018. Since August, we welcomed 3 new staff members in our baby and explorer room. We also created the role of Lead teachers and congratulated Miss Julie, Miss Jackie, Miss Savannah, Miss Christina, and Miss Paige for starting their new positions. In November we had to say goodbye to a loyal teacher, Christina, as she left to be a stay-at-home mom. Now Miss Brenda is our lead teacher and we are excited to have a new assistant teacher, Juliet (and her son) join us in the Tiny Tot room in January!

In October we got a new gym floor and the kids were very excited to still have a place to go and let out some energy! We had to say goodbye to our beloved big wheels but are looking forward to getting new equipment and toys that the children can use in the gym. We also said goodbye to a tree in our playground. It was tough for the younger kids to not have an actual playground for the summer, but they were excited to see the tree get taken out! In the New Year we will be looking at getting more/new mulch in both playgrounds!

In 2018 we have very big plans for helping improve the center. I am currently in the process of doing trainings to get on a Food Assistance Program. This program will allow us to be reimbursed for serving certain foods. We are already using many of these foods, so it will be a great asset to finally be on the program! Getting on the CACFP, or food program, will also allow us to continue the process of being an accredited center and earn a rating on the QRS system.

In 2018 we will still be evaluating the center and looking at how things run and how they can run more efficiently. We have already starting enrolling new students and hope to continue that in the new year. The teachers and I have a lot of goals for areas to improve and we want to continue improving and growing in 2018.

Report from the Minister for Youth and Family

In my third year of ministry at Grace, I continue to give some thought to what it means to be “the church” in the lives youth and families. In our busy and ever-changing world, the church is called to adapt to the needs of those in the first-third of life. It seems to me that this means finding ways to better equip parents and families to do faith formation in the home as they are not always able to join us here in the building. Also, it means inviting all the members of our congregation to be involved in forming the faith of our youngest members. In doing so, we are keeping the promises we made to these children at their baptism:

- to teach them the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments
- to place in their hands the holy scriptures
- to nurture them in faith and prayer so that they may learn to trust God
- to proclaim Christ through word and deed
- to care for others and the world God made
- to work for justice and peace

This is the lens through which I see my work here amongst you. My role here is to help this community of faith keep these promises to the youth and families of Grace Lutheran Church. In order to do that, I need your help. These families need your faithful love and care, so I ask you to be about this important work.

What follows are some highlights of this ministry with youth and families over the last year.

-Preschool and Elementary VBS

As the primary staff contact for this vibrant ministry, I served on the VBS planning team and accompanied an amazing group of volunteers in leading these two weeks. This year the team created our own curriculum using the Sunday School Spark Rotation materials. Our theme was Exodus and the children learned this rich story of our faith and heritage over five days of lessons from the second book of the Bible. Once again, we partnered with Grace Kids Care for Preschool week including those children in a morning of VBS and offered an all-day program for those in Kindergarten through fifth grade with over 60 student total over the two weeks. Volunteers make this ministry possible and we had at least 25 volunteers that worked to make VBS an enjoyable and meaningful experience for these children. Leslie Denton served as the VBS director for Elementary week and we were blessed by her leadership skills and rapport with the children.

-ROOTED

ROOTED was a service leadership trip organized by the Southeastern Iowa Synod in partnership with our sister synod, the Grand Canyon Synod. I accompanied four high school students to Nevada and Arizona for a week of learning about the needs and issues of the church in those places. Topics covered included- human trafficking, immigration, homelessness, and care for creation. We met groups and individual who are fighting for justice in these areas of need and had the opportunity to learn from and serve with them.

-Confirmation

We have added a parent leader model to Sixth and Seventh Grade Confirmation this Fall. To provide an opportunity for parents to engage in faith conversations with their children, parents have been asked to commit to a shared small group leader responsibility. We meet each Wednesday evening from 6:30-7:30, with the first half of our time being large group

discussion and the second half learning in small groups with a parent leader. We have easily adapted our problem-based learning curriculum from Sparkhouse called Colaborate to fit this new structure and are studying and discussing the New Testament. These classes are supplemented with service learning opportunities every 4-6 weeks.

Eighth grade students are spending this last year of Confirmation with a mentor of their choosing. Each month these mentor pairs have an assignment to complete that usually consists of some exploration and discussion of faith. The goal is for these students to get to know an adult member of this congregation, and through that relationship we hope they will practice and become more comfortable articulating what they believe as they prepare to affirm their baptism in the fall of their ninth-grade year.

For the second year we had a Fall Confirmation Retreat at Boone Y-camp with St. Peter Lutheran Church in Grimes. This is a good partnership and is a fun enhancement to our weekly/monthly gathering.

-Grace 2020 Education Task Force

I have had the privilege of being involved in conversations about how we live into and meet the goals set by our Grace 2020 team in the area of Education. A plan has been laid out with several phases and I am excited and hopeful to see what the future holds for this area of ministry here at Grace.

This ministry with youth and families continues to be a joy and a challenge. I look forward to working together with all of you in the year to come.

Peace, Ellen Rothweiler

From the Sunday School Team

Sunday School

One way that we served the children of Grace in 2017 is through Sunday School. We have continued to use Spark Rotation curriculum this year for Preschool and K-5. This offers a multi-sensory approach to learning Bible stories. Last Fall, we planned and began implementing a two-year rotation of ten key stories from the Old Testament and ten key stories from the New Testament. We are using the New Testament stories for the 2017-2018 program year and will use the Old Testament stories for the 2018-2019 program year.

Frolic, a program for children age 0-3 and their parents, continues this program year. We are using a curriculum from Sparkhouse to introduce faith stories and practices to the youngest members of Grace. This also gives parents a time to be together and support each other.

Middle and High School students have the opportunity to “hangout” during the education hour on Sundays and have conversation with their peers and caring adults. Topics range from school and other activities to The Trinity and The Ten Commandments.

Report from the Director of Communications Michelle Voelker

2017 was a very exciting year at Grace, communicating and incorporating 2020 goals into documents and publications, and adding the new address, logo, and font to freshen up our printed materials, mailings, and social media presence. We have also recently added a set of icons designed to bring instant recognition to events representing the five pillar areas of Grace 2020 goals both within and outside the community of Grace. We have been busy trying new modes of advertising and incorporating all the years' new changes into standard documents used by various committees such as endowment and scholarship applications. Some of the steps we had hoped to complete during 2017 are just now being implemented as it seemed unwise to begin a bigger advertising push before the new address and logo were ready and before we were certain the website address would remain the same. We are looking forward to continuing to expand our advertising and social media presence and finding new ways to distribute our publications to a larger audience.

Friendly Visitor: We have and will continue to specialize the newsletter format so you know where to find information relevant to you each month, while we work on keeping it fresh, updated, and easy to read. Eight pages for years, we have consistently had ten pages of material for the past 6 months. Newsletters are available in print, distributed to the Grace Kids Care families and those who request mailings. They are also published on the website and on Facebook for the public to access and see what we are about.

Announcements: We continue to look for ways to keep this fresh every week, providing news in a quickly digested manner while looking for ways to reduce waste.

E-news: The free e-news program we use has added upgrades which now allow us to customize the news in many ways, as well as schedule mailings at times the office may not be open. Our publications look more professional and polished than ever before, and we are able to provide items such as the Advent Journey series, so it arrives in your inboxes at the start of the day, rather than interrupting your work day. Visitors to our Facebook page and new website are able to sign up for our newsletter directly. Due to continued changes in email addresses, and spam laws, the lists have now been merged into one – everyone signed up will receive all notifications: e-news, devotions, and funeral notices. Once a person removes themselves from the mailing list or changes the address mailings are delivered to, even if by accident, staff are not allowed to update those accounts. Having easy access on the website will make updating or reconnecting easier for those individuals.

Website: Our new website has just been published, and we couldn't be more excited about the clean look and the updated possibilities for keeping you notified, as well as informing potential visitors and guests of who we are. Please be patient as we work to get the calendar and resources sections fully updated. We will be working with committees and groups to make sure your information and offerings are properly communicated. We also want to thank Jason Bradwell for creating our previous website, hosting, and maintaining it for so many years, and continuing to help us problem solve and fix things long after we had hoped to have the new site up and running.

Facebook: Our Facebook page continues to build and gain followers. It is a great source of information linking to our enews, newsletter, and website, especially for the public at large. While we use it as a place to communicate who we are at Grace and to be a part of the greater community – both the Lutheran community and our local community – we also

continue to try different ways to begin conversations and build community with you as members. Advertising on Facebook has proven to be a cost-effective way of sharing information to the wider public and expose and familiarize others with our logo and presence. We will continue to explore and increase our use of this avenue in 2018.

Advertising: We have experimented with larger, color paper ads this year. With the new logo and address in place, we will be increasing our advertising presence in local publications. As mentioned above, Facebook is a cost-effective way to build brand recognition in the community, and as such we will be publicizing various events and worship services. We will also continue to work with our membership on Facebook to help like, share, and promote Grace posts as a cost-free method of advertising.

Bulletin board and Photo Walls:

The endowment granted to the office for expanding the photo wall has been slowed by family concerns and construction injuries of those involved with the building and assembly of the project. The purchases have been made and largely assembled. Final steps and installation should happen this spring, allowing us to display all members' photos, while allowing room for growth!

Report from the Church Administrator

My time (18+ months) at Grace Lutheran Church has been a blessing. Grace is a special place – and not just on Sundays! I'm grateful for all the volunteers that are here on Sundays and throughout the week. It is also wonderful to share our space with so many groups throughout the year: Lutheran Services in Iowa, First Circle Friends, Legacy Group (A.A.), T.O.P.S., Feed Greater Des Moines, Girl Scouts, Polk County Elections, Iowa Farmer's Market Association, Mid-Iowa Cactus and Succulent Society, Des Moines' Knitter's Guild, Lions' Club Breakfast, Spirituality/Prayer group, Southwestern Community College Choir, HS Mock Trial, and more!

- Thank you to my colleagues here at Grace. We have a cohesive staff that works well together.
- I enjoy my role as Church Administrator
 - Maintaining the finances and records of Grace Lutheran Church
 - Managing the church calendar and use of space here at Grace - in-house groups and outside groups
 - Arranging for assistance when something malfunctions
 - Reviewing contracts, inspections, etc.
 - Updating ACS and online pictorial directory
 - Providing general administrative support
 - GKC: assist with deposits, enter data into ACS, and help with account analyses
- Grace Kids Care: In 2017, a large portion of my time was spent with GKC finances as we aimed to get the program back on solid financial ground. Progress has been made! The transition to a new director (Brooke Howsare) has gone smoothly. I still assist with the financial aspects, but Brooke has assumed a lot of the responsibilities. Plans are in place for continued growth and improvement with GKC in 2018.

Thanks, again. I look forward to what lies ahead for Grace Lutheran Church.

Peace,
Denise Friesth

Altar Guild Year End Report 2017

The Altar Guild members at Grace prepare the altar and apse of the church for worship services. Members prepare the altar for Sunday worship, assist with communion, and clean up. Preparation for special events such as Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, baptisms, weddings, and funerals are also the responsibility of the Altar Guild.

Altar Guild is responsible for the care and maintenance of the paraments, linens, banners, candelabras, and candlesticks. Altar flowers are funded by members of the congregation. The communion bread is made and donated by the Piltingsrud/Nelson family. The following items are purchased throughout the year:

- Wine, grape juice, wafers
- Candles for baptism and special services
- Communion cups
- Candle oil
- Cleaning supplies
- Advent supplies and decorations

A wedding committee was created this past year to inform and assist families in planning their wedding at Grace.

The members meet one Saturday morning each month for fellowship and to discuss any problems/concerns.

Twelve women served on Altar Guild during 2017. There will be fourteen volunteers in 2018.

Thank You to:

1. The Willing Workers for their assistance throughout the year.
2. Members of the Embroiders Guild for making the baptismal napkins.
3. The 2017 Altar Guild volunteers for their dedicated service; Kathy Bowermaster, Connie Heuton, Marion Nehmer, Loree Nelson, Cindy Peeler, Jane Ridnour, Rita Stackhouse, Carol Woodruff, Melissa Young and Barb Zimany. Marion also served as Flower Chart coordinator.

Budgeted amount for 2017: \$1,800.00
Expenses for 2016: \$1,449.90

Report respectfully submitted,
Gail Peterson & Sue Anderson
Co-Directors of Grace Lutheran Church Altar Guild

Report from the Companion Congregation Committee

Due to many other activities, Grace has not been as active in the last years. However, we are planning a trip to visit our friends in the next two years. Our friends have invited us to join them to discuss new projects.

We have continued to receive letters and information. The community is building a new church office. Africa is the fastest growing place for new Lutherans! The beautiful church on the hill had a small office on a hill above the church. They had a need to expand the space, connect to electricity and water, and bring their equipment into the twenty-first century. More about that later this year.

Through Endowment Grants, we have continued to support the Scholarship Fund and a new program called Most Vulnerable Children Project. Many children struggle to have money for school fees and some are orphans or living with other relatives to go to school. The MVC is a Saturday School which provides tutoring, extra meals, agriculture education, and life skills. We still are partners in some positive activities.

Jeanette Sasek is the current Peace Corps Volunteer living in our village of Msindo.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Freimuth Helt, Recording Secretary
Companion Congregation Committee

Report from First Circle Friends

This early- to mid-stage memory loss ministry, offered in coordination with Lutheran Services in Iowa, has had strong volunteer support and has stayed relatively constant in the number of participants enrolled in the program.

We began the year with 6 enrolled and ended the year with 5 enrolled. Our average participant attendance for each session (held twice a month) was 5, as we work around participants' illnesses, vacation, and lack of transportation. We see some of our participants move to a stage of memory loss that requires the next level of care, making it necessary for them to drop from our program.

The support we get from LSI is strong. As the year ended, the primary contact for LSI for the last several years was assigned to another position and the back-up became the primary contact. We are confident the support from LSI will continue to be strong, as the new primary contact has been participating with us for over a year and is very supportive of the program and our group, as her mother was previously a participant. They continue to bring in new participants as we lose some others, provide training for our volunteers, and participate in our sessions.

We currently have 16 dedicated volunteers (14 of those from Grace): 4 leads, 10 one-on-one volunteers, 1 additional music volunteer, and 1 additional lunch helper.

Report from Cradle Roll

The Cradle Roll is a program through the Grace Education Program that ministers to parents with children between the ages of birth through age three.

“Splash!” materials from Augsburg Fortress press are being used. Each month the parents are sent a “Parent Page” appropriate for the age of their child. A music CD is sent with the first parent page and again when the child is 13 and 25 months old. The materials are supplemented with additional materials at Christmas, Easter, and the child’s third birthday.

There are currently nineteen children enrolled in the Grace Cradle Roll.

Five children were baptized during 2017. At the time of baptism, the parents are presented with “The Beginner’s Bible” for their child. A dove with the child’s name and baptism date is added to the Baptismal Roll in the sanctuary. The dove is sent to the parents just prior to the 1st anniversary of their child’s baptism. The bibles were purchased with funds received from the Grace Endowment Committee in 2012. Len Ringgenberg makes the doves which are donated by Len and Helen. The name plates are purchased with funds from the Kevin Nehmer Memorial.

When a child is added to the Cradle Roll the parents are provided information and encouraged to participate in the Frolic program that meets during the education hour on Sunday mornings.

Prior to the Sunday School year for which the child is eligible, the parents are sent a letter inviting them to enroll their child in the three-year old Sunday School class. Five children were sent invitations in September 2017.

Along with the “Splash!” materials other expenses include supplemental materials, postage and mailing materials.

2017 Budget: \$400.00
Expenditures:\$447.60

Respectfully submitted,
Gail Peterson
Cradle Roll Coordinator

Report from the Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Team this past year focused their fall campaign on encouraging the congregation to continue supporting the programs at Grace Lutheran Church at the same level from the previous year, when, due to overwhelming support of members, we were able to wipe out a large budget deficit. The team supported office staff in getting the Stewardship packets prepared and distributed to families and assisted in helping to collect the pledge cards.

Sincerely,
The Stewardship Team
Norm Iverson, Howard Kulzer, Tim Nelson, Lynn Niemuth, Jay Wangerin

Grace Fellowship Report for 2017

Grace Fellowship meets the first Sunday of the months of March, May, October, and December. In addition to this being a social event, the group enjoys food and entertainment provided by the committee. We do have a catered meal consisting of Turkey and Ham Balls provided by Price Chopper which guests are invited to register attendance.

This past year we enjoyed Sister Cathy Talarico and Sister JoAnn Talarico both of whom works with the women at the Mitchellville Prison, Barb and Ro Zimany on their trip to CUBA, Seniors on the Move, and Des Moines Playhouse "Old Time" Radio Drama.

All adults and friends of Grace are welcome to attend.

Randy and Karen Taylor will continue as chair of the group. Carol Krause continues to be our Secretary and Treasurer.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Taylor

Report from the Grace Garden Committee

Committee: Julie Honsey, Joie Gronert, Marion Nehmer, Carla Peterman
Other garden helpers: Marilyn & Mike Nizzi, Mike Peterman, Jay Wangerin, Gary Nehmer, Scott Honsey

In 2017 the height of the raised beds was doubled and filled to increase production of root vegetables, which worked beautifully. (Thank you, Mike and Carla Peterman!). Plants and seeds were purchased, nurtured, and planted as was appropriate and cost effective. Plantings were rotated, and companion planted to make the most of the space and growing seasons. Compost was purchased and spread at the end of the season. Plans are being made to slowly convert the garden space to raised beds inside the fence, to allow for less till, easier weeding and weed control, better moisture and water control, ease of gardening for "aging but not yet old" gardeners in years to come. This arrangement will also allow for more compact square foot type gardening, and a peaceful place to walk and quietly contemplate nature on our grounds. It will also make it easy for anyone in the church to walk in and harvest a tomato or cucumber. This conversion will take a few years, the first installment of beds will take place in 2018 using wood purchased with the remainder of the 2017 garden budget.

Produce was harvested from early June through October, two to three times a week. The majority of the harvest was taken to local food pantries immediately. One harvest per week was placed in the entrance hall, providing a place for all who passed through Grace to take home, trade, or contribute from their own gardens.

The committee continues to evaluate and try new cultivars for hardiness, disease and pest resistance, and amount of harvest. Plans are already in place for 2018 cultivars, though assistance in planting, watering, weeding, and harvesting is always welcome.

Sincerely,

Michelle Voelker, RDN and the Garden Committee, volunteers, and recipients

Report from the Grace Library

The library has adult and children's books for check out as well as reference books that are available for use in the library. Through the 2017 budget, books and supplies were purchased to continue the purpose of the library. The church library should be a resource center for the development and growth of the Christian faith of every individual in the congregation.

For 2017, the Grace Lutheran Church Library had a budget of \$150 for books and \$115.50 was spent. The budget for supplies was \$100 and of that, \$64.37 was spent. 1 DVD and 8 books were purchased.

"Circles of Care"

"Great Horse Stories for Christian Girls"

"To Be Where You Were"

"Reformation ABCs"

"Martin Luther's Table Talk"

"For the Beauty of the Earth"

"When Lightning Struck"

"The Life of Martin Luther"

DVD: "Martin Luther, the Idea That Changed the World"

Respectfully submitted,
Marion Nehmer and Bev Anderson, Co-Chairs.

2017 Altar Flower Annual Report

In 2017, flowers on the altar were provided through contributions from our members for every Sunday they were needed, with the exception of 3 Sundays. The support of the congregation for this program was wonderful. Cost for the two bouquets on the altar was \$38.00 with a promise from the florist that it will remain so for 2 years.

Lilies were delivered to home bound members and were gratefully received by those unable to attend church.

The budget included expenses for additional altar decorations for Easter and Christmas, palms for Palm Sunday, and roses for newborn babies. Lilies and poinsettias are provided through contributions from the congregation.

Our current florist is Irene's. They have been very responsive to our requests and needs.

Submitted by Marion Nehmer

Evangelism Committee

Our mission: to find ways to send the Good Word and activities representing it to the neighborhood.

Projects for 2017:

Greeters: to greet newcomers and create a friendly atmosphere. Encourage visitors to write in the book; get name and numbers; make friendly contact later.

We do not have enough greeters. Perhaps, “between silos”, ushers or other groups could volunteer to be trained to be greeters.

Little Library: Little Libraries are popular in the neighborhood and it would be a friendly gesture.

Plans have been obtained and it has been started. Library Committee will work with us. Discussion and plans for a Little Pantry have begun as well.

Beaverdale Parade: we decided to wait to participate in the parade until September of 2018.

We need to establish a separate committee, which can plan, in advance, what we will do. We have pictures of the parade and samples of activities. In addition, some churches have picnics, dinners, joint activities, etc. to display their churches and friendliness as part of the neighborhood. We used to participate a long time ago. Many churches, businesses, and politicians are involved in some way. This could not be the Evangelism Committee’s responsibility alone; it would have to have an organizing committee and large number of committed volunteers.

Beaverdale Farmer’s Market: We wanted to show ourselves in a quiet way as contributors. Several people set up in the Kidzone some crafts and activities for children. It was just a first step to get a feel for what we might do.

We had an increase in attendance from the beginning to the end of the Market and received compliments and had “regulars” who sought us out. (A more detailed report about the Beaverdale Farmer’s Market is available from the team or in the office.)

President of Committee, Karla Swanson

Secretary, Mary Freimuth Helt

Members: Nancy Crowfoot, Rich Snyder, Barbara Tussing and Cathy Watson

Report from Visiting Friends

The purpose of Visiting Friends is to bring loving care, attention, and concern to those who are isolated from our church family due to age, illness, or circumstance. By reaching out beyond the church walls, it is our hope that God's real presence may be sensed and felt wherever two or three are gathered.

Visiting Friends may carry the Good News to members who are unable to get to the church and they may deliver/distribute communion to our friends at home.

During the past year, Visiting Friends traveled to more than five local facilities and several private residences to visit, distribute communion, and provide DVDs of our Sunday services.

If you want to know more about Visiting Friends, have questions about the ministry, or know of someone who may benefit from the ministry, please contact Martha Mitchell (iwork4Him@gmail.com or 515-491-3062).

Report from Grace Women's Board From Mary Freimuth Helt

Grace Women's Board consists of representatives from women's groups – Lydia Circle, Martha Circle, and Ladies Night Out.

A change was made for Ascension Day and Maundy Thursday Services. Instead of a luncheon to which surrounding churches were invited, we changed service times to 1:00 p.m. and followed with cookies and coffee for a fellowship time. Neighbor church members are still invited to attend.

In December, Martha Circle and Lydia Circle members met for a brunch and then assembled gift bags for home-bound members of Grace. Each gift bag contained a variety of items, including:

- A handpainted tray made by members of Lydia Circle
- An embroidered Christmas ornament made by the Embroidery Guild
- Christ In Our Home (large print) devotional book donated by W.E.L.C.A.
- 2017 calendar from Luther Park
- A Christmas card with ornaments made by Sunday School students
- A Christmas card from the congregation

In addition, a poinsettia was provided by the congregation and delivered with the gift bags. Bags and poinsettias were delivered by members of the Tuesday morning Bible Study Group as well as other members of Grace. Thank you, all, for this important ministry.

Report from the Social Ministry Committee

The following activities/events were sponsored by the Social Ministry Committee in 2017:

Souper Bowl Sunday in January/February. The congregation was asked to donate cans of chili and beef stew to fill the barrel for Hope Ministries. The drive took place for two weeks, ending on Super Bowl Sunday.

Pet Project Sunday in February. Made pet toys/treats for the Pet Project of the Midwest.

Grace members volunteered at Meals from the Heartland twice during 2017.

Community Pet Blessing was held in September.

Christmas Star Tree for MOSAIC and LSI Early Childhood Development in November/December. Gifts were received for 60 recipients.

Respectfully submitted,
Gail Peterson, Chairman/Secretary

2017 Social Ministry Committee members: Sandy Briggs, Joie Gronert, Denny Rehder, Jane Ridnour, and Barb Zimany.

Report from the Lutheran World Relief Team

We give thanks to God for his work in leading our congregation to raise funds, create and send so many quilts, kits and blankets to Lutheran World Relief in 2017.

Two fundraising campaigns were held raising a total of \$2382.70.

During February, our confirmands tied and blessed fleece blankets.

A group of quilters met on Thursdays throughout the year and made quilts from donated fabrics. They also lead quilt tying sessions for congregation members in March.

At two intergenerational Sunday School events in March and October, the congregation made tied blankets and kits. We also commemorated the 500th anniversary of the Reformation through Bible study, and a discussion of Martin Luther's teachings about being servants of all.

From all of these events, we made and sent 18 beautiful quilts, 6 fleece blankets, 219 personal care kits and 201 school kits.

During Advent, our confirmands had a poignant discussion about the needs of families with new babies who live in poverty. They worked to help meet those needs by tying 3 more fleece blankets, and making 40 baby care kits for LWR. These will be sent with the Spring 2018 shipment.

Thank you to everyone for your contributions and participation in quilting, tying, assembling, and packing these gifts for our neighbors in need around the world.

Your LWR Team: Gail Peterson, Helen Ringgenberg, Lori Fry, Mary Jo McCleary, Beth Flannery, Lois Slye, Lynn Niemuth, and Cathy Watson

Lutheran World Relief Account 2017

BALANCE ON HAND - January 1, 2017	\$ 1,760.25
(balance agrees with Church records)	
INCOME:	
Donations Received (January-June)	\$ 1,012.70
Donations Received (July-December)	\$ 1,370.00
Total Income	+ 2,382.70
	\$ 4,142.95
DISBURSEMENTS:	
Expenses - Spring Drive	\$ 1,262.33
Expenses - Fall Drive	\$ 1,054.40
Total Disbursements	- 2,316.73
BALANCE ON HAND - December 31, 2017	\$ 1,826.22
(balance agrees with Church records)	

Report from the Property Committee

The Grace Lutheran Church property committee again had a busy year for maintenance and improvements around the church.

Maintenance and improvements include:

- New carpet tiles in the Library, Conference Room and Work Room (Endowment grant)
- Grinding/polishing the concrete floor in the Café (insurance settlement for sewer backup)
- New ceiling tiles and sound insulation in the Chapel (conversion to Music rehearsal space)
- New choir robe storage units for the music rehearsal space (Malmin Fund)
- “Future” restrooms near the Café finished and in use (Malmin Fund)
- New storage room for Grace Kids Care (Malmin Fund)
- Construction of a new raised foundation for the A/C unit north of the Gathering Hall
- Purchase of floor mats for the entrances (eliminates significant monthly rental of the past)
- Installation of rubber floor tiles in the Gymnasium (Malmin Fund)

The Property Committee has had fewer regular monthly meetings this past year, using email as an alternate means of sharing information and ideas and for organizing “hands-on” projects.

The committee is planning for additional improvements in 2018. Several of these will hopefully be funded by Endowment grants, with others hopefully funded by the Malmin Fund.

Additional improvements in the new Music Rehearsal Room and the Cafe are on hold until site drainage improvements are made north of Grace Hall.

Construction of a Grace Little Free Library/Little Free Pantry is planned for 2018.

The Property Committee again thanks our custodian, Todd Haugen, for keeping the building and grounds well cared for and for all his work to accommodate the many activities that take place within the church every week. We would also like to thank the members of the property committee, and all others who contribute their time and talents to the upkeep and improvement of the church property.

The Willing Workers group continues to meet on Wednesday mornings to work on various projects, complete routine maintenance, and make minor repairs throughout the church as needed. This group of dedicated individuals completes a lot of projects and repairs every year and we thank them for all they do.

Eric Weber and Aaron Brandsfield have again led a Saturday morning group that does a Bible study, has breakfast, and does various projects around the church once a month. We thank this group for contributing and serving in this manner. They are looking for additional members to join them.

Report of the Marvin Malmin Fund Task Force for 2017

The Marvin Malmin Task Force has been meeting since August 2016. The purpose of this group is to develop recommendations to present to the Congregation Council on the usage of the money remaining in the Marvin Malmin Bequest.

At its meeting on April 11, 2017, the Task Force decided to separate the remaining balance in the Malmin Fund into three partitions.

A “Finance Partition” has allocated a total of \$100,000 to be used to reduce the balance that Grace owes to the Endowment Fund. This transfer to the Endowment Fund was approved by the Congregation Council and completed in December 2017.

The remaining money in the Malmin Fund is to be divided between the other two “partitions”, the “Property/Capital Needs” partition and the “Mission/Outreach” partition. Following additional meetings, the Task Force made specific recommendations to the Council on expenditures from these partitions.

From the “Property/Capital” partition, the “future” restrooms near the Café and a new storage room for Grace Kids Care were completed and are in use. Other projects recommended to and approved by the Council included purchase of two choir robe storage cabinets for the Chancel Choir and purchase of rubber floor tiles for the Gymnasium.

The Council also approved hiring an interior designer to assist with developing plans to make needed improvements in the Sanctuary, Gathering Hall, main West Entry and the Kitchen. This planning is currently underway and recommendations to the Council will be made in 2018.

From the “Mission/Outreach” partition, money was allocated for paying Chancel Choir section leaders, and for developing our new Grace logo and website. Money for a new digital sign to be strategically placed on the south lawn was also approved by the Council. This has been delayed by the need to obtain a variance from the Des Moines Zoning Board of Adjustment.

The Malmin Fund Task Force continues to be very deliberate and diligent in the recommendations it is making for the use of the remainder of this fund. Specific recommendations from Grace members are encouraged. Please contact any of the Task Force members listed below.

Your Committee,

Don Peterson (chair), Alexson Calahan, Chuck Denton, Tammy Denton, Kevin Krause, Pastor Mike Schmidt, Rich Snyder, Rick Stammer and Barb Zimany

Report of the Endowment Committee

The purpose of the Grace Lutheran Church Endowment Fund is to promote faithful Christian stewardship by providing a congregational plan to receive grants, gifts, or bequest of money to be used to enhance the total program and mission of the Church beyond that supported through regular giving and apart from the general operation of the congregation. The Endowment Fund Committee acts as custodian of the Fund.

The Endowment Committee approved the following distributions of 2016 income, which was distributed in March of 2017:

Awards to Grace Lutheran Church:

- \$2,110 for carpet replacement in the conference room
- \$3,225 for carpet replacement in the library
- \$4,000 for soundproofing in the Chapel
- \$760 for the Little Free Grace Library
- \$590 for expansion of the photo wall
- \$1,000 for scholarships for Msindo/Mararo students

Other Awards:

- \$2,500 for curriculum of refugee ESL classes with Lutheran Services in Iowa

A total of \$14,185 was awarded. Requests for grants totaled \$18,685.

Since inception, the Endowment fund has awarded a total of **\$305,250** to **160** projects.

Additionally, at year-end, the Endowment Fund received payment (from Malmin Funds) of \$100,000 on funds loaned to Grace Lutheran Church. At the same time, a four-year note was executed on the remaining balance of \$275,000 at a 3% interest rate.

Your Endowment Committee,

Loree Nelson (Chairman), Stacie Holst (Secretary), John Justice, Aaron Page and Mark Stumme

Election of Endowment Fund Committee Members

Loree Nelson has been an active member of Grace, serving on various committees and playing in the bell choir. Loree is married to Tim, and their three kids grew up at Grace. Two of their children still live in Des Moines with their families, and one lives in Shanghai. So, Tim and Loree have become annual visitors to China to see Jared, his wife and little daughter, Betty. Loree is a partner in the law firm of Gislason & Hunter. She spends most of her professional time defending doctors and other health care providers in medical malpractice lawsuits. Loree served on the Endowment Committee in the past, took a break and then returned for a term. She is now running for a second term.

Thank you for your service, Loree.

Report of the Finance Committee

Grace Lutheran Church

The Church results were above budget in 2017. Overall, a surplus of \$29,830 was incurred as compared to a \$26,300 deficit budget projection. This incredible turnaround was a result of a very successful second stewardship campaign in the spring. A big thank you to the congregation for this effort.

Highlights of actual activity include the following:

- Pledged and unpledged offerings were above budget by \$32,000. Again, this was primarily a result of the spring stewardship campaign to eliminate the deficit. The campaign resulted in \$17,500 of one-time gifts and \$10,500 of increased pledge levels.
- Easter, Christmas, and other offerings were above budget by \$8,000.
- Overall, expenses were \$15,000 below budget. This was due to numerous small amounts including a utility rebate, lower snow removal costs, and lower supplies and maintenance.
- Certain significant projects during the year were funded with Malmin monies and are not included in these operating results.

Budgeted activity for 2018 reflects a \$10,000 deficit operation. Highlights include the following:

- Pledged offering activity is down compared to 2017 by \$22,000 due to lower number of individuals pledging.
- Staffing costs are comparable to 2017. Total staffing costs are approximately \$250,000 and represent 57% of the total operational costs of the Church.
- The budget for the professional leadership positions includes salary, employer taxes, pension and medical insurance.
- Synod Benevolence was reduced by \$5,000 in 2018 to reflect the lower trend of offerings.
- The activity for debt service reflects interest only on the Endowment debt. The debt was reduced by \$100,000 during the year with Malmin monies. The new terms for the remaining \$275,000 debt is a four-year 3% note with no principal payments required till maturity.
- Other budgeted expense items are consistent with normal activity and committee requests

Grace Daycare

Grace Kids Care reflected losses of \$678 in 2017, \$12,339 in 2016 and \$10,940 in 2015. These losses have reduced the cash to a balance of \$13,673. Changes in Daycare management have included a much greater focus on financial operations, which have been positive since the change. Budgeted activity for 2018 reflects profitable activity.

Your Finance Committee,

Kevin Krause (chair), Kevin Drury, Paul Kallenbach (Financial Secretary), Tom Selander (Treasurer)

LITANY

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Amen.

God has joined us to one another, in congregations, in our denomination, and with Christians around the world. As church together, we faithfully strive to participate in God's reconciling work, near and far.

Together, we are partners in ministry.

We plant new congregations and renew existing ones; we work with ethnic ministries to reach all God's people; we develop and share resources for God's work when we gather.

Together, we are partners in ministry.

We support The Lutheran World Federation's global communion of churches and send more than 200 missionaries to more than 40 countries; we facilitate dialogue and common action among communities of other faiths that God's love may spread far and wide.

Together, we are partners in ministry.

We equip current and future leaders through our colleges, universities, seminaries and lay ministry schools; we engage in hopeful conversation about current economic, environmental, political, public and social issues.

Together, we are partners in ministry.

Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ



1 Let us tal - ents and tongues em - ploy, reach - ing out with a shout of joy:
2 Christ is a - ble to make us one, at the ta - ble he sets the tone,
3 Je - sus calls us in, sends us out bear - ing fruit in a world of doubt,



bread is bro - ken, the wine is poured, Christ is spo - ken and seen and heard.
teach - ing peo - ple to live to bless, love in word and in deed ex - press.
gives us love to tell, bread to share: God (Im - man - u - el) ev - 'ry - where!

Refrain



Je - sus lives a - gain, earth can breathe a - gain, pass the Word a - round: loaves a - bound!

Christ has freed us *from* sin and death, even from ourselves, so that we can live with and for our neighbors; in worship we cry out to be forgiven, fed and equipped that our faith may be aligned with our lives and our lives with God's good purposes.

Scattered into the world, we do God's work.

Sent into the world – in every relationship, in every daily task, in every corner of life – we provide daily bread for our neighbors, nurture hope and faith, and work for a healed, reconciled and just world.

Scattered into the world, we do God's work.

On the highway and in the skies, in jails and in offices, in the unemployment line and at the mechanic's shop, in kitchens and in classrooms, shopping for toys or hoping to find our next meal, in nursing homes and in the voting booth, God is at work, providing for our needs and for our neighbors' needs.

Scattered into the world, we do God's work.

Gracious God, you call us together, and you send us out. Give us strength to be your people, both when we gather and when we scatter. Deliver us from service of ourselves alone, and deliver us from service to the welfare of our congregations that we may do the work you are calling us to do, alone and together. Whether in our daily lives or in and through our congregation, may we always seek common good. We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Text: Fred Kaan

Music: LINSTEAD, Jamaican folk tune; adapt. Doreen Potter

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REFLECTIONS ON OUR RESPONSE TO GOD'S GRACE AND OUR WORK TOGETHER

Whether we are gathered in our faith community or sent into our daily lives, we remember that we are a new creation through God's living word by the power of the Holy Spirit, and we are to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed. As we live into God's word and deed, we are also reminded to be faithful stewards of God's creation and gifts. Faithful stewardship is about holding to God's purpose and ensuring the responsibilities and resources that God has entrusted to us are used with great care and with accountability to God, to each other and those served by the church.

With the adoption of Strategic Directions 2025 in 2017, the goals and priority areas for the ELCA as a whole church are identified. These goals and priorities are based on a shared trust and hope that the future is in God's hands. As stewards of God's grace, we are responsible for the time, talents and resources that will make these goals and priorities attainable in the many expressions of the church. As you consider your goals, priorities and resources for the years ahead, please consider how the following strategic directions are connected to your ministry.



1

A thriving church spreading the gospel and deepening faith for all people

(Acts 1:8, 1 Peter 2:9-10, Matthew 28:16-20, Romans 1:16)



2

A church equipping people for their baptismal vocations in the world and the church

(Philippians 2:4-11, 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, Romans 6:3-4, Mark 10:13-16)



3

An inviting and welcoming church that reflects and embraces the diversity of our communities and the gifts and opportunities that diversity brings

(1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 2:14-20, Acts 10, Galatians 3:26-28)



4

A visible church deeply committed to working ecumenically and with other people of faith for justice, peace and reconciliation in communities and around the world

(2 Corinthians 5:14-21, John 13:12-15, Isaiah 58:1-11)



5

A well-governed, connected and sustainable church

(1 Corinthians 4:1-2, 2 Corinthians 4:1-2, Micah 6:8, 2 Corinthians 9)