

ANNUAL REPORT

— 2018 —



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

A message from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

Dear siblings in Christ,

As members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we are freed by grace to live faithfully, witness boldly and serve joyfully. As communities of Jesus that nurture life-changing relationships with God, one another and the world, we are confident about who we are in Christ and what God is calling us to do. Whether worshiping wherever two or more are gathered, engaging in lively conversations about faith, or rolling up our sleeves and getting to work, we strive to share God's grace and love in Christ for all people and creation. This reflects the vitality we find in Jesus Christ, our own spiritual life and our desire to participate in what God is doing today.



Within each community of Jesus there are leaders who strive to model an attitude of servanthood, trustworthiness, humility, patience and listening first while striving to work with others in healthy ways. These leaders teach all ages, motivate believers, build consensus, share a vision, discern direction and facilitate action. Their attention is focused on growing disciples who are sent into their daily life to love and serve others as friends, neighbors, parents, citizens and workers. Together we recognize the importance of growing disciples and multiplying leaders who serve inside your congregation and beyond your walls.

As our congregations plan their work for the coming year and how to use the resources God has entrusted to them, I invite you all to think about the relationships that bring you vitality and the leaders you nurture for God's mission in the world. While you make many decisions, remember you are not alone. We are all partners in sharing the gospel. Together, by God's grace, we can do what God is calling us to. May you go forth to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God.

Serving together in Christ's name,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton". The signature is fluid and cursive.

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

You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart, and with all
your soul, and with all your mind,
and with all your strength.

Mark 12:30

Annual congregational meeting opening liturgy

Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart

1 Spir - it of God, de - scend up - on my heart;
 2 I ask no dream, no proph - et ec - sta - sies,
 3 Have you not bid me love you, God and King;
 4 Teach me to love you as your an - gels love,

wean it from earth, through all its puls - es move;
 no sud - den rend - ing of the veil of clay,
 all your own, soul, heart, and strength, and mind?
 one ho - ly pas - sion fill - ing all my frame:

stoop to my weak - ness, strength to me im - part,
 no an - gel vis - i - tant, no op - 'ning skies;
 I see your cross; there teach my heart to cling.
 the bap - tism of the heav'n - de - scend - ed dove,

and make me love you as I ought to love.
 but take the dim - ness of my soul a - way.
 Oh, let me seek you and, oh, let me find!
 my heart an al - tar, and your love the flame.

Text: George Croly, 1780-1860
 Music: MORECAMBE, Frederick C. Atkinson, 1841-1897
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Litany

- L Recognizing that our faith is a living, busy, active and mighty thing, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with each of you.
- C And also with you.
- L Teach us, O Lord, to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.
- C Lord in your name we pray.
- L Descend on our hearts, O Lord, that we may love others in the way Jesus loves us.
- C Christ in your name we pray.
- L Empower us, O Lord, to be enthusiastic in pursuing your vision for our congregation.
- C Lord in your name we pray.
- L Move us, O Lord, to engage issues in our community in Christ-like ways, and to pursue deep and authentic relationships with those we serve and partner.
- C Jesus in your name we pray.
- L Strengthen us, O Lord, to face the barriers we encounter in doing your work, learning to work with others although we may not agree.
- C Lord in your name we pray.
- L Give us, O Lord, the ability to adapt to the cultural, economic and social changes that occur in the neighborhoods we serve.
- C Christ in your name we pray.
- L Guide us, O Lord, to be a healthy congregation that learns from our failures as well as our successes and offers wisdom to others.
- C Lord in your name we pray.
- L Let us pray. As we strive to become the church that we proclaim to be, help us to grow leaders who focus on the gospel of freedom, forgiveness and reconciliation as given to us through God's indescribable act of love in the death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. Help us to take a fresh look at our baptism each day so we may discover vitality in our relationship with you, each other and those we serve in the world.
- C Amen.



Agenda

Call to Order

Devotions

Adoption of Agenda

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Election of voting members for 2019 Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly
Friday, May 10, 2019 – Saturday, May 11, 2019 West Des Moines

Election of Council Members & Endowment Committee Members....Pg 24

Balance Sheets and Income Statements

Budget Adoption

Adjournment

Lord's Prayer

Grace Lutheran Church Congregational Council

Term Expires
February 2019
David Gronert
Matt Jordahl
John Roehrick
Sally Preston

Term Expires
February 2020
Bruce Bergman
Don Peterson
Cheryl Weatherington
Barbara Zimany

Term Expires
February 2021
Aaron Brandsfield
Tammy Denton
Carter Woodruff
Dean Watson*

*serving 2-yr-term vacated by Connie Heuton

2018 Executive Committee

John Roehrick
Bruce Bergman
Tammy Denton
Dave Gronert

Congregational Officers

President	John Roehrick
Vice President	Bruce Bergman
Secretary	Dave Gronert
Treasurer	Tom Selander
Financial Secretary	Paul Kallenbach

Grace Lutheran Church Staff

Pastor

The Rev. Michael Jon Schmidt

Grace Staff Members

(in alphabetical order)

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

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.***

Darlene Stuckle	02-11-2018
Harold Mann	02-28-2018
Lois Slye	07-06-2018
Richard (Dick) Hirschauer	07-28-2018
Jack Frost	09-18-2018
Richard (Dick) Naney	09-25-2018

Membership Statistics

	<u>Baptized</u>	<u>Confirmed</u>
Membership end of 2017	706	602
as reported in the Congregational Report to the ELCA		
Members removed during 2018		
by death	6	6
by transfer to other congregations or other reasons	2	2
Members received during 2018		
by baptism	2	
by transfer fr other congregations by affirmation of faith	7	7
baptized youth confirmed in 2018		2
Membership end of 2018	707	603

Statistical Report

Worship Services Conducted.....	66
Weddings held at Grace.....	1
Baptisms – Members (Youth).	2
Baptisms – Non-members.....	0
Member Funerals held at Grace.....	5
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
Average Sunday worship attendance 2018....	141

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Jan	408	404	373	355	341	291	305	250	256	245	215	181	194	185	153	159	142
Feb	392	359	354	305	307	242	314	281	252	212	216	231	199	197	183	172	133
Mar	493	377	388	402	299	315	389	280	263	259	230	264	188	205	255	157	133
Apr	433	507	470	326	399	379	324	342	300	347	289	224	268	270	191	237	192
May	415	363	385	334	336	306	270	250	236	216	219	190	190	166	185	157	148
Jun	414	353	340	295	312	299	251	218	187	195	198	156	167	166	150	153	125
July	360	349	293	296	277	272	242	192	169	199	174	159	164	149	141	128	112
Aug	385	332	313	297	277	252	260	245	155	196	188	165	170	162	153	130	126
Sept	457	397	376	333	292	298	263	245	219	206	181	165	196	187	178	151	134
Oct	404	428	439	398	341	299	321	266	247	225	215	209	213	203	175	165	134
Nov	422	382	360	326	309	307	302	291	235	237	211	241	206	205	184	168	135
Dec	412	380	319	319	394	265	269	238	206	210	208	176	198	197	202	229	165

**Grace Lutheran Church
Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes
January 28, 2018**

The meeting was called to order at 11 AM by Congregational President John Roehrick.

Pastor Mike Schmidt led the group in devotions with a reading from The World According to Mr. Rogers. In our congregation, what is essential is sometimes invisible to the eye. The essence of individualism in a community of faith makes us strong, makes us who we are, and increases energy. He then offered a prayer asking God to keep us strong in our faith as we pursue the goals we have set for our future.

Rich Snyder was appointed as Parliamentarian. It was moved, seconded, and passed to adopt the agenda as printed. It was moved, seconded, and passed to adopt the minutes of the 2017 Annual Congregational Meeting as printed.

The assembly was directed to review the Congregational Council President's Report and the Pastor's Report printed in the 2017 Annual Report. There were no questions concerning these reports, and they were approved by unanimous consent.

Pastor Mike highlighted the progress made by the 2020 Committee as printed in the Report from the 2020 Committee. There were no questions concerning the report and it was approved by unanimous consent.

Brooke Howsare, Director of Grace Kids Care, reported about the positive changes that have occurred this year. She highlighted educational opportunities for herself and the staff, additions to the staff, and acquisition of new software written specifically for daycare (Kangarootime and Zoo-phonics). She mentioned ongoing efforts to be accepted for a Food Assistance Program which will provide reimbursement for some food items currently being served. The daycare is also looking into healthcare plans for the staff. The report was approved by unanimous consent.

There were no questions concerning the Staff Reports, and they were approved as printed in the Annual Report by unanimous consent. There were no questions concerning the Committee Reports, and they were approved as printed by unanimous consent.

Council elections were held to fill four open three-year positions. Elected by unanimous consent were Aaron Brandsfield, Tammy Denton, Connie Heuton, and Carter Woodruff. Loree Nelson was re-elected to the Endowment Committee by unanimous consent.

Kevin Krause presented the Financial Report and 2018 budget. He reported a strong balance sheet and a 2018 budget with a \$10,000 projected deficit. He expressed confidence that the deficit will be absorbed with cash on hand and previous surplus funds. A question was raised concerning the \$5,000 reduction in Synod Benevolence. Kevin indicated the reduction was to reflect the percentage drop in pledged offerings. It was moved, seconded, and passed to approve the 2018 budget as presented.

There being no further questions and no new business, it was moved, seconded, and passed to adjourn the meeting at 11:35 AM, followed by the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,
David F. Gronert, Congregational Secretary

Report from the Congregational Council President

Dear Friends in Christ:

Another year has passed and as we look at the events and occurrences which took place at Grace, we continue to find a family of faith and commitment. Again, the strength and commitment of the congregation was shown when the call went out for re-visiting our pledge offerings. Because of this, we were able to end the year with less than a five hundred dollar loss for the year. Thanks be to all.

As we look back at 2018 and thank God for his blessings, we must continue to be forward thinking and forward looking as well. There are many challenges awaiting the congregation. We must reach out to the neighborhood and surrounding community to bring in new and active members to our home. How we will perform this ministry is the challenge before us, but it is necessary for the renewal of faith and continued vitality of the congregation. We must look at outreach to our members as well - this will continue to challenge – but we will have to minister to our members so each of us can keep and renew the faith, if necessary and to continue and make new friendships here at our Grace home.

Additionally, continued financial commitment is a necessity for vibrancy and vitality. To continue with our programs and staff and to expand the programming, we will have to expand our financial resources and giving.

The council is grateful for all who worship here at Grace and grateful for all that volunteer their time in any way. With the anticipated election of new council members and the end of a term for some of the members, I want to thank all who have served. Those whose terms are expiring include: David Gronert, Matt Jordahl, Sally Preston, and myself. David, Sally and I have chosen to run for second term. We thank Matt for his time faithfully served on the council.

In conclusion, we must also be thankful for the leadership of Pastor Mike and our dedicated staff - Ellen Rothweiler, Denise Friesth, Michelle Voelker, Emma Stammer, and Todd Haugen. They are God's blessing to us. Thank each of them for their service and dedication.

May 2019 be a continued year of blessing for our congregation here at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church.

John P. Roehrick
Congregation President

Pastor's Report 2018

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.” Hebrews 11:1-3: NRSV

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This passage is Hebrews is from a sermon with the larger sermon regarding faith. More specifically, it is in the middle of a section that is designed to give hope, courage, and faith to a community of faith that is struggling. It is meant to give clarity to a congregation that is tired and weary, not sure what is next. These words mark the beginning of a section that highlights the ways that God worked through those who went before, and not calls us into the same work. This walk of faith is now passed on to us, and we are called to share it with the world.

We continue to do that work here at Grace Lutheran Church. We are called to share the Good News of Jesus, the Christ. We are called to share in the grace of God, welcoming all in the name of Christ. It is by faith that we can see that God is up to something, and through prayer we seek to be a part of that plan. It is difficult to know how to sum up this last year.

In so many ways I lack the words. It is as though the year has had some distinct seasons, some corporate and some personal. All of it was held by grace through faith.

In so many ways the year started with Spring. As we moved to one worship service each Sunday, there was a tangible shift in energy. In those first months I heard from different people nearly every week regarding the excitement of seeing everyone together. The music sounded different. Worship felt different. It was like things were coming back to life. Spring was here.

The summer months brought a season of construction. My personal world fell apart with the rather sudden death of my Mother. I cannot begin to describe the many ways that left my siblings and me absolutely crushed after losing both parents within 4 years. I am very thankful for the support of this community of faith during that time. As I returned to work, construction began. The Sanctuary, Gathering Hall, and Entryway were a torn apart. It is as if what was felt on the inside was now being lived on the outside.

As the programmatic year began in September, we dove into a season of possibility. The Sanctuary, Gathering Hall, and Entryway neared closer and closer to completion. The pipe organ was put back together. Active Grace Sunday School began and led a charge regarding food insecurity. Everything was picking back up. The pews were filling. Children were leading. It is such a blessing to be the church.

Lastly, as the year ended, things moved to another season of change. Brooke Howsare left Grace Kids' Care to pursue a career in Human Resources, and with comes change for that ministry of Grace Lutheran Church. It has meant a lot of extra time and energy, but we have a candidate approved and ready to start soon. With that change coming together we are moving back into a season of spring, and hopefully growth. Ministry goes through seasons in the same way that life does. There are ups and downs, but together we walk by grace through faith. Thank you for the privilege of serving you as pastor.

In Christ,
Pastor Mike

2018 Grace 2020 Report

The Grace 2020 Committee originally started meeting in 2016 and over the course of many meetings, developed a vision for Grace in 2020. This vision would drive some cultural changes and thus, something that would take time to implement. Implementation of the vision started in 2018 and will continue in 2019. Each of the five pillars, (Worship, Education, Well-being, Outreach, and Finance) has or will have a working subcommittee that will help with the implementation of plans for the pillar. The implementation of the pillars has been staged, with the initial focus on Worship, Education, and Well-being in 2018. You will notice that at times there is overlap between pillars in regard to implementation. Here is an update on each....



Worship: Changes have been implemented that are now part of our worship experience. The move to one service. An emphasis on prayer, including centering prayer. An update of the Sanctuary and the Gathering Hall to make them warmer and more inviting. The organ update and expansion.



Education: Sunday School is now Active Grace. Active Grace is a service-learning based curriculum which aligns with today's youth and interests. Adult education continues on Sundays.



Well-being: Well-being has been active in the past year in a number of ways. Well-being focused on four general areas...financial well-being, physical well-being, emotional well-being, and spiritual well-being. Emails were provided to the congregation focusing on the beauty in the world and to provide new ways of prayer using the Lectio Divina method. Sunday educational sessions focused on wellness issues from financial well-being to healthy dietary habits. This group also played a role in developing the "centering prayer" experience each Sunday. Members of the subcommittee include Suzanne Carney, Julie Honsey, Loree Nelson, and Michelle Volker.



Outreach: Plans are in the formation stage for Outreach. Most visible to date would be the launch of a new website in 2018. The future focus will continue to be serving our members and the community outside of our congregation.



Financial: PushPay (electronic giving) was established in 2018. The Finance subcommittee will become more active in 2019 to reach our 2020 vision.

The Grace 2020 Committee welcomes your thoughts and feedback. Members include Kevin Drury, Dave Gronert, Tracy Justice, Loree Nelson, and Pastor Mike Schmidt. The late Ardis Schmelzer was also instrumental in the establishment of the visioning process.

Worship & Music Ministry

2018 has been a year of growth and change for music and worship at Grace.

Highlights include:

- * The transition to a single combined worship service has been a successful change.
- * Opera Iowa visits to Grace and Moore Elementary.
- * The Muscatine Youth Choir doing service projects in Des Moines and singing in worship.
- * Updates to the Gathering Hall and Worship spaces; thank you to all volunteers and staff who made worshipping in Grace Hall possible during this time.
- * The updated organ console installed in November and a new rank of pipes to be installed in February 2019.
- * Grace Players offerings in worship.
- * Music with the newly launched Active Grace Sunday School.
- * A Load the Loft choir event in September – a wonderful way to fellowship with singers and jump start the programmatic year!
- * The terrible flooding in Msindo Hall, but thank you to all who helped – with moving items to be stored elsewhere, cleaning floors, checking out the plumbing, etc.
- * The Bells & Brass and Chancel Choir programs in December.
- * The addition of a Chapel time with daycare kids once a week.
- * The lovely festival of trees and altar decorations during the Advent and Christmas seasons.

Even despite the upheaval in the summer months - cleaning up a flooded basement, switching worship spaces, worshipping without an organ for several months – the worshippers and volunteers at Grace have embraced change and “gone with the flow” in such a gracious manner and with a hopeful attitude. It is good to be back in the newly remodeled sanctuary with a restored organ console!

As we move forward in 2019, I am excited to see the continued 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

Grace Kids Care Report

from Denise Friesth, Church Administrator

With the transition in directorship for Grace Kids Care at the end of 2018 and the start of 2019, I will share an update. (Brooke Howsare resigned to take a position in Human Resources and her last day was December 14, 2018. As of January 15, 2019, we are close to naming a new director!)

I began my position as church administrator here at Grace Lutheran Church in July 2016. Part of my role was to assist Grace Kids Care with financial duties like payroll, accounts payable, recording of tuition payments, etc. For one year, I worked with long-time GKC Director, Heather Nelson. After Heather's resignation in July 2017, Brooke Howsare was named Director of Grace Kids Care.

Grace Kids Care reflected 5-digit losses in 2014, 2015, and 2016. Together, Brooke and I worked diligently to turn the program around financially while continuing to offer quality care. GKC finished 2017 with a loss of \$678. We had turned the corner! Grace Kids Care finished the year with a surplus \$1,468. With the hiring of a new director in 2019, the plan is to continue the dutiful financial managements while also continuing to improve the programming and care provided.

We currently have a roster of 50 students (infant through 5-years-old) in five classrooms with a staff of about 20 (FT & PT) employees. We are in the process of hiring a new director to start soon and look forward to growing this ministry in many ways in 2019. Thank you to the dedicated staff that have really stepped up to continue providing quality care and programming for the students. Special thanks to Pastor Mike for his support during the transition. Here's to 2019!

Report from the Minister for Youth and Family 2018

My fourth year of ministry at Grace presented new and exciting challenges. We have made some changes to the way we do Sunday School with the hope that we may better equip parents and families to do faith formation in the home and live differently in Christ during the days and weeks when they are not able to be here with us. As we strive for this transformation, I continue to invite 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. Your prayers, and kind words, and building relationships with these young people all serve to nurture their faith and build up this community of faith. We all benefit from being the church together.

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 The Parables and the children learned about these symbolic stories told by Jesus over five days of

lessons from the New Testament. 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.

-ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston "This Changes Everything!"

A group of ten high school students and adults from Grace attended the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston Texas June 27-July 1. During their four days there they had an opportunity to worship with 30,000 Lutheran youth and adults, serve by cleaning up at a local cemetery, and get to know some youth from the SEIA Synod.

One adult leader explained the experience this way- "We had a great time getting to know each other, learning how we are the same and how we are different from each other, and most importantly that each of us there in Houston were saved by Grace, through Faith. It's our uniqueness that makes God's world SO amazing and our salvation That Changes Everything!" We are grateful to the Grace members who supported us in this life changing journey.

-Confirmation

We have continued with the parent leader model in Sixth & Seventh grade Confirmation in 2018 in the hopes that this will provide an opportunity for parents to engage in faith conversations with their children. We meet each Wednesday evening from 6:30-7:30, with the first half of our time being large group discussion & the second half learning in small groups with a parent leader. We are using problem-based learning curriculum from Sparkhouse called Colaborate & have studied & discussed The Old Testament and Lutheran History and Catechism. We also added a four-week unit on prayer in the Spring, experimenting with different prayer practices & taking time for solitude & reflection. 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 & 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 & become more comfortable articulating what they believe as they prepare to affirm their baptism in the fall of their ninth-grade year.

This year for our Fall Confirmation Retreat we partnered with Capitol Hill Lutheran in Des Moines for a day of service learning and fellowship. This felt like an equal partnership and the retreat model is a fun enhancement to our weekly/monthly gatherings.

Active Grace Sunday School

This Fall we launched a new Service Learning approach to Sunday School. Service Learning is an intentional four step process; Preparation, Action, Reflection and Celebration. We chose to work through these steps with the issue of Food Insecurity. We chose the story of Jesus Feeding 5,000 as our Bible text to connect this need with our faith. We have had a lot of fun and learned a lot about loving others and living out our faith in daily life with this new model of learning. We are excited to begin our next unit on Friendship in 2019.

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

Report from the Director of Communications Michelle Voelker

2018 was another very exciting communications year with some fun learning curves.

Grace Website

The new Grace website came online. It is a beautiful website that is easy to work with and update.

The Electronic Street Sign along Urbandale was installed in July through the generous bequest of Marvin Malmin. We've had a bit of fun playing with a few of the 16.7 billion possible colors! We're settling into finding the best combination of number of messages in easy to read colors. Bible study is one of a few groups where people have mentioned stopping in because of the sign.

The Tuesday e-news continues to gain readers at a steady pace, and remains at a 40-60% weekly open rate – well above the industry average of 20%. The e-news is published to Facebook as it is sent to your emails.

The Friendly Visitor continues to grow and evolve. In previous years it was a standard eight pages. In the last two years we consistently have enough information to require a ten and now sometimes twelve page monthly newsletter. A smaller Christmas newsletter was added and printed in the middle of December to highlight Christmas Worship events. Newsletters are provided to Grace Kids Care Families, published on the Grace website and Facebook pages, available in printed form through the building for visitors, emailed to members, and mailed to homebound members,

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. The new Grace Logos have helped with consistency in finding items of interest, whether education, outreach, well-being, financial, or worship related.

Facebook continues to be a cost effective way to communicate to members on Facebook, advertise events at Grace such as Concerts and Art shows, connect with Grace Kids Care families, and promote familiarity with our logo.

Advertising: We continue to participate in sharing community events with our neighbors, and in advertising East and Christmas in the Des Moines register.

Wifi and Internet: Thanks to our amazing volunteers, Nick Medhurst and Harlan Mortenson working with our internet provider, running cable through the building, changing out modems and firewalls, and other things, we now have faster internet which makes Grace Staff very happy. In addition, we also have access in more parts of the building, and a Guest wifi account that keeps staff connectivity at workable speeds even when large groups are in the building.

Report from the Church Administrator

2018 has been a full year in my role as Church Administrator. I continue to enjoy the people of Grace and the people that spend time here either for worship or as part of a group that enjoys meeting here at Grace. Grace is a special place and not just on Sundays! Weekdays are bustling with all the Grace Kids Care activities in addition to other gatherings. 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 Breakfasts, Spirituality/Prayer group, Southwestern Community College Choir, HS Mock Trial, and more!

- Thank you to my colleagues here at Grace.
- 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 all financial duties (payroll, accounts payable, tuition payments, account reviews, etc.)
 - Grace Kids Care: In 2018, a large portion of my time was spent with GKC finances as we continued to try to operate in a solid financial position. We finished the year financially with a surplus of almost \$1500. Brooke Howsare, GKC director, resigned in December 2018 to take a position in Human Resources in the DSM area, so the administrative and operational tasks in her absence are being covered by Pastor Mike, Jessica Hernandez (Assistant Director GKC) and me. I have spent many, many hours the past month assisting GKC. (A busy time of year plus in GKC began using Kangarootime, a childcare management software program, in November 2018. Quickly learned how to use it to assist with administrative and financial aspects of GKC. The good news is that we have named a new Director of GKC! Thank you to all that stepped up in order to continue providing quality child care in the absence of a director.

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

Peace,
Denise Friesth

Altar Guild

The Altar Guild members at Grace prepare the altar for Sunday worship and assist with communion and clean up. Any additional preparation for special events such as, Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, baptisms, and funerals are also the responsibility of the Altar Guild.

Members handle 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 smaller group has been designated for handling funerals going forward. These are volunteers that will help to prepare for the services as needed to meet the requests of the families.

The group has continued to meet most months on the 3rd Saturday for fellowship and to discuss any problems/concerns. This has been a great advantage for extra planning and communication.

There are currently thirteen volunteers that serve on Altar Guild. All have agreed to continue their service for 2019. Thank You to:

1. The Willing Workers for their assistance throughout the year.
2. The 2018 Altar Guild volunteers for their dedicated service; Kathy Bowermaster, Connie Heuton, Marion Nehmer, Loree Nelson, Cindy Peeler, Gail Peterson, Jane Ridnour, Amy Schmelzer, Rita Stackhouse, Carol Woodruff, Melissa Young, and Barb Zimany. Kathy also served as Flower Chart coordinator.

Budgeted amount for 2019: \$1,800.00

Expenses for 2018: \$1,391.25

Report respectfully submitted,
Sue Anderson, Director of Grace Lutheran Church Altar Guild

Report from the Social Ministry Committee

In 2018 the Social Ministry Committee participated in or sponsored the following activities/events:

- * Souper Bowl Sunday for Hope Ministries
- * Pet Project Sunday
- * Meals from the Heartland
- * Christmas Star Tree for Mosaic and Lutheran Services in Iowa

Respectfully submitted,
Gail Peterson, Chairman/Secretary

2018 Social Ministry Committee members: Sandy Briggs, Joie Gronert, Gail Peterson, Denny Rehder, Jane Ridnour and Barbara Zimany

Report from the Companion Congregation Committee

The Companion Congregation Committee continues to communicate with our friends in the Tanzanian communities of Msindo and Mararo in the Pare Mountains. This year we sent some money for the Scholarship Fund and sent what we had from the Companion Fund to assist with completing the office. We are most anxious to see pictures and hear about what has happened since we last visited.

Due to some health concerns, the Committee members have been unable to plan a trip this spring. We are hopeful that we will be able to visit in 2020. If you are interested in being part of this group, please let Mary Freimuth Helt and Jane Ridnour know.

We need people on the committee to make plans and communicate, even if you do not choose to make the trip. We need some new ideas and energy. Whatever you have to offer is welcome. PLEASE join us. We do exciting things and go exciting places!!

Mary Freimuth Helt and Jane Ridnour
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 remained consistent in the number of participants enrolled in the program. We began the year with 5 enrolled and ended the year with 7 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.

We have struggled with our ability to maintain lead volunteer support, but that load has been considerably offset by one of our volunteers offering to make and serve the lunch. Although LSI had hoped in May to provide us with more support in that area, that has not yet occurred. LSI does continue to bring in new participants as we lose some others, provide training for our volunteers, and attend most of our sessions. We also struggled with money to operate in 2018; however, we then received two very generous donations from Thrivent Financial, which allowed us to keep our program running.

We currently have 14 dedicated volunteers (11 of those from Grace). Those numbers include 3 leads, 10 one-on-one volunteers (one of whom also serves as the lunch provider and one as a music provider), and 1 additional music volunteer. An estimated 180-200 volunteer hours are given every month in support of the First Circle Friends program.

Connie Heuton

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 fourteen children enrolled in the Grace Cradle Roll.

Two children were baptized during 2018. 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 Fund. Len Ringgenberg makes the doves which are donated by Len and Helen in memory of their grandson, Alec Freese. The name plates are purchased with funds from the Kevin Nehmer Memorial.

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. Seven children were sent invitations in September 2018.

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

2018 Budget: \$450.00

Expenditures: \$380.76

Respectfully submitted,
Gail Peterson
Cradle Roll Coordinator

Report from the Stewardship Committee

In the early summer the Stewardship team met with representatives of the Music Committee, at their request, to explore the possibility of asking the congregation for funds in order to repair and improve the capability of the organ.

In the fall the team launched the 2019 pledge drive, through Temple Talks by Tim Nelson and Jay Wangerin. With much support from Denise Friesth, Jay Wangerin, Randy Taylor, Tim Nelson and Norm Iverson worked to assemble and ready the 2019 pledge packets for mailing to members of the congregation. Jay and Norm also worked to contact members who had not returned a pledge following the suggested return date.

We continue to look for ways to make supporting Grace easier for the congregation.

Sincerely,
Howard Kulzer on behalf of The Stewardship Team
Norm Iverson, Tim Nelson, 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 have a catered meal provided by Price Chopper consisting of Turkey, Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Ham Balls, Dressing, Green Bean Casserole, Cranberry Salad, and Rolls. Guests are invited to register attendance.

This past year we were entertained by Mary Bracken of IPTV, Mollie and Kevin Cooney, Pastor Minna Bothwell of the Capitol Hill Lutheran Church, and Douglas Karl singing gospel hymns and Christmas hymns.

In 2017 we gave \$100.00 each to Lutheran Services in Iowa and Hope Ministries, In 2018 we gave \$50.00 each to the Blue Barrel Kettle, Hope Ministries, Iowa Public Television, and Lutheran Services in Iowa.

All members of Grace and friends are welcome to attend.

Randy and Karen Taylor will continue as chair of the group. Carol Krause continues to be the secretary and treasurer.

Respectfully Submitted,
Karen Taylor

Report from the Grace Garden Committee

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

In 2018 we began adding raised beds to the main garden, for the purpose of better controlling weeds and pests, reducing the need to till and maintain a tiller, reducing soil loss, better moisture control, and ease of gardening on aging legs and backs. Thank you, Mike and Carla Peterman, for building these! We are working on plans to outfit the remaining garden space with raised beds.

Plants and seeds were purchased, nurtured, and planted as was appropriate and cost effective. We continue to evaluate and reassess what grows well, produces the most food for the space and work, and provides the most nutrients to those benefitting from the produce grown.

Produce was harvested from early June through October, two – 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.

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 2018 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.**

An Endowment Grant of \$1500 was received to purchase a new computer, a printer for catalog cardstock and a monitor. The new computer is able to connect to the internet & utilize the online catalog, back it up to the cloud & print cardstock easily. Our former computer worked well for many years, but with a Windows XP operating system, was limited in running programs currently needed.

The Grace Lutheran Church Library had a budget of \$150 for books. The budget for supplies was \$100. With our library budget the follow books were purchased:

Adult Books:

- "Five Presidents"
- "Magic Strings of Frankie Presto"
- "Being Mortal"
- "Book of Aron"
- "Healing the Soul of a Woman"
- "An Invisible Thread"
- "The Next Person You Meet in Heaven"

Children's Books:

- "The Twelve Days of Christmas in Iowa"
- "Brown Girl Dreaming"
- "An Invisible Thread Christmas Story"
- "Little David's Brave Day"
- "It's Your World: Get informed, Get Inspired and Get Going"

Our supply budget was used for the subscription fee for Cross Library Catalog, an online catalog of the library collection.

Respectfully submitted,
Marion Nehmer and Bev Anderson Co Chairs.

Altar Flower Program

Fresh flowers and greens enhance our sanctuary and altar area throughout the year, thanks to the support of the Grace congregation. Members are offered the chance to designate their flowers in honor of, or memory of, friends and loved ones with a message in the bulletin and are welcome to take their flowers home after Sunday worship. Easter lilies and Christmas poinsettias are also provided by member contributions, and additional poinsettias are purchased for delivery to homebound members with support from the congregation.

In 2018, the cost was \$38 per Sunday for two bouquets, and congregational contributions covered most of the regular expenses. Additional funds are budgeted for roses for newborn babies, palms for Palm Sunday, and any extra flowers needed throughout the year. The weekly cost will remain the same for 2019, and we'll continue working with Irene's Flowers.

Thanks for helping to bring the beauty of God's creation to our worship space!
Submitted by Kathy Bowermaster

Evangelism Committee

Our Little Library is installed and ready for business. Plans for a Little Pantry are in process.

Greeters: We try to have someone in the Gathering Hall on Sunday mornings to greet everyone coming to worship. We try to follow-up on the visitors we meet if we get an address. If you would like to serve as a greeter, please check the volunteer list!

We use Vacation Bible School as a strong outreach and teaching tool.

Beaverdale Farmer's Market: this team has continued to run a craft booth in the Kidzone to be a part of the neighborhood and community. We would love to have more church representatives from Grace involved in different crafts. If you have some extra craft items and/or a skill to teach, let us know what you could add to the craft ideas.

For 2019:

Are there things that we can do as a congregation to support our ministries in VBS and the Day Care to demonstrate support and encourage those ministries? What limitations do we have and specifically how can we contribute?

Please give ideas to someone on the Evangelism Committee or join us to find more ways to spread the Good News!

Karla Swanson, Cathy Watson, Rich Snyder, Nancy Crowfoot , Mary Freimuth Helt

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 several local facilities and private residences to visit and distribute communion.

If you would like to know more about Visiting Friends, have questions about the ministry, or know of someone who may benefit from the ministry, please contact Cheryl Weatherington (cherylweatherington@rocketmail.com/515-669-0441), Martha Mitchell (iwork4Him@gmail.com/515-491-3062), or Cherie Rissman (cherierissman@gmail.com/515-205-8939).

Report from Grace Women's Board From Mary Freimuth Helt

We currently have three women's groups here at Grace – Lydia Circle, Martha Circle, and Ladies' Night Out. Grace Women's Board is a loosely allied group. One ongoing project is our work on improving the kitchen. We have several new committees which are staffed with members of our Circles. New for 2019: The Lydia Circle and Martha Circles have combined to meet in the daytime. All women are invited to attend. We have been altering some of our regular activities to meet the needs of the more people in our communities. More information as we continue to evolve.

In December, Martha Circle and Lydia Circle members met for a brunch and then assembled 40 gift bags for home-bound members of Grace. Each gift bag contained a variety of items, including:

- Christ In Our Home (large print) devotional book donated by W.E.L.C.A.
- 2019 calendar from Luther Park
- Christmas ornament made by Sunday School students
- A Christmas card from the congregation
- Fabric bookmark
- Tissues and body lotion

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.

Member Care

The Member Care Team has continued its ministry of providing assistance to Grace members in times of need; illness/surgery or loss of a family member. This may include providing meals, transportation, visits, cards and/or phone calls. During 2018, 100 Grace members (individual or family) were contacted by Member Care. This does not include the numerous Grace homebound that have also received phone calls, visits and cards.

Members may request care by calling the church office at 515-276-6873.

For 2018:

Income:

Beginning balance \$200.00

Donations received during the year \$175.00

Total Income for year \$375.00

Expenditures

Reimbursement to MCT members for supplies/food \$197.24

Donations of supplies/food by members of MCT. \$390.92

Total expenses/donations for 2018 \$588.16

2018 Member Care Team members: Joie Gronert, Mary Helt, Connie Heuton, Julie Honsey, Gail Peterson, Jane Ridnour, Melissa Young

Report from the Lutheran World Relief Team

We give thanks to God for his work in leading our congregation to raise funds, and create/send so many quilts, kits and blankets to Lutheran World Relief in 2018. Two fundraising campaigns were held raising a total of \$1,528. At Sunday School events in April and September, the congregation tied blankets & made kits. We also tried a new school kit challenge in August, in which members collected and donated all the items needed to send one kit. Thirty-seven kits were donated! From all of these events, we made and sent the following to Lutheran World Relief:

- 16 beautiful quilts
- 6 tied fleece blankets
- 200 personal care kits
- 237 school kits
- 91 baby care kits and
- 12 fabric kits.

We received a huge donation of baby clothes from the Take 2 Consignment Sale in April. This will help us make cost-effective baby care kits for months to come.

We were displaced by flooding in the church basement in June, which slowed down our quilt production and forced us to redesign our storage and work spaces. We look forward to being able to move back into refurbished basement rooms soon. Thank you to all those who have helped clear out, clean up and renovate the space.

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, Jessye Flannery, Kathy Piltingsrud, Barb Zimany and Cathy Watson.

Lutheran World Relief Account 2018

BALANCE ON HAND - January 1, 2018	\$ 1,826.22
(balance agrees with Church records)	
INCOME:	
Donations Received (January-June)	\$708
Donations Received (July-December)	\$820
Total Income	\$1,528
	3,354.22
DISBURSEMENTS:	
Expenses - Spring Drive	\$1,193.42
Expenses - Fall Drive	\$1,344.64
Total Disbursements	\$2,538.06
BALANCE ON HAND - December 31, 2018	\$816.16
(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. These included dealing with the significant rain event in June that caused flooding and sewage backup in Msindo Hall, and major improvements that were funded by the Marvin Malmin bequest.

Maintenance and improvements include:

- * Installation of the new digital sign on the south lawn, funded by the Malmin bequest.
- * Replacement of the sump pump in the furnace room in Msindo Hall.
- * Replacement of the back-check valve in Msindo Hall with a larger one.
- * Cleaning of the floors and walls in Msindo Hall after flooding in June.
- * Replacement of the drywall removed from classroom walls in Msindo after flooding.
- * Renovations in the West Entry, Gathering Hall and Sanctuary, all funded by the Marvin Malmin bequest.
- * Periodic roof repairs for the roof and skylights over the Gathering Hall.

The Property Committee has again 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.

Additional work will be done in Msindo Hall in 2019 to complete repairs caused by the flooding and sewage backup. This will include improved floor treatments, installation of a lift to meet accessibility requirements for access to Msindo Hall at its northeast entrance, painting of walls and replacement of the old metal framed single pane windows. Availability of funds for this work will dictate how soon they may be accomplished.

Several other painting projects will be planned throughout the facility. Hopefully these will be done by member volunteers.

The Property Committee again wishes to thank 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.

The Property Committee would like to encourage you to consider joining us in 2019. This would involve 4 or 5 meetings at church, and communication by email on issues that we address as needed.

Respectfully submitted,
Don Peterson (Chair), Chuck Denton Norm Iverson, Jay Wangerin Eric Weber

Report from the Memorial Fund Committee

All memorial money donated to Grace Lutheran Church is deposited to a special reserve account with memorials for each individual tracked separately. Purchases from these funds are made according to the needs of the congregation and the desires of the family.

Contributions received from January 1 - December 31, 2018 were in memory of:

Kay Barks, Robert Campbell, Harold Mann, Richard (Dick) Naney, Bette Schmidt, Lois Slye, and Darlene Stuckle, adding a total of \$5, 889 to the fund.

A significant amount of memorial funds were used during the year to support the major projects of the Malmin funds (Sanctuary remodel and organ update). Specifically, the monies were used for the ambo, altar, and organ grilles.

The December 31, 2018 balance in the Memorial reserve account is \$21,425.

Report on the Columbarium Fund – Grace Lutheran Church

As of January 14, 2019
(Report from Bill Jensen)

Cash Balance of December 22, 2017	\$14,070.63
Receipts:	
Interest on funds	\$6.97
Deposits:	
Disbursements:	
Singh Faceplate	\$234.00
Cash Balance of December 24, 2018	\$13,843.60

Members that have purchased niches – McIntyre, Tussing, Frost, Krauss, Rehder, Iverson, Buihner, Page, Batten, Singh, Zimany, and Knudsen.

No niches were purchased in 2018.

Background: Grace Lutheran Church has a Columbarium in the Prayer Chapel. Grace's Columbarium is a forty-eight companion Garden Niche Columbarium that accommodates a maximum of ninety-six cremation urns. The purchase price of each niche is \$1200.00. It has always been the obligation of the church to serve its congregation from baptism to death. Although earth burial on church grounds is not feasible at Grace, the desire to continue this sacred rite remains for some members. The Columbarium at Grace allows us to revive the crucial ministry of offering a rightful place at the church for those who have come before us. It also comforts the living with the knowledge that we too will be welcomed home to the church.

Report of the Marvin Malmin Fund Task Force for 2018

In 2016, Grace received an extremely generous bequest of \$711,407 from the estate of former member Marvin Malmin. Initial uses of this money were approved by the Congregation Council and consisted of a \$70,000 “tithing gift” to our Southeast Iowa Synod of the ELCA, and payment of all “outside debt” of the church held by First American Bank. Also funded were improvements to the sound system and media upgrades. Following those initial expenditures, the Council appointed a Task Force to develop recommendations for the use of the remaining funds from this bequest. This Task Force has met since August of 2016 for that purpose and a wide range of projects have been successfully completed, with expenditures made from three separate “partitions”: a Finance Partition, a Mission/Outreach partition and a Property/Capital Needs partition.

From the Finance Partition, the Task Force recommended an expenditure of \$100,000 to pay off a portion of the internal debt that Grace owes to its Endowment Fund. This was approved by the Council and the payment was made in 2017.

From the Mission/Outreach partition, the following projects have been completed: new Grace logo and web site development, new digital sign on the south lawn, Chancel Choir section leaders, Chancel Choir robe storage units, and matching funds for renovation, additions and improvements to our pipe organ.

From the Property/Capital Needs partition of the Malmin Fund, the following projects were completed since 2016: painting and carpet in the Education Wing, new restrooms in the basement near the “Café”, new storage room for Grace Kids Care, and rubber floor tiles for the gymnasium. Money from this partition has been used during 2018 for major renovations in the main entry (painting, lighting, carpet and new doors), the Gathering Hall (painting, new lighting, new carpet, new coat closet, art display area, new tables and chairs, and coffee station improvements) and the Sanctuary (painting and new carpet). Additional improvements in the Sanctuary (new Altar, Ambo, organ chamber grilles and communion rails) were made during the 2018 renovation from the Memorial Fund. The 2018 renovations were made under the guidance of our interior designer, Mindi Dickinson, together with a Renovation Committee appointed by the Council, consisting of Loree Nelson, Mary Jo McCleary, Pastor Mike Schmidt and Don Peterson.

The money that presently remains in the Malmin Fund is intended to be used to fulfill additional projects from the “Mission/Outreach” partition that will be approved by the Council.

Providing many hours of service in support of the work of this Task Force were: Alexson Calahan, Chuck Denton, Tammy Denton, Kevin Krause, Pastor Mike Schmidt, Rich Snyder, Rick Stammer, Barb Zimany and Don Peterson (chair)

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 2017 income, which was distributed in March of 2018.

Awards to Grace Lutheran Church:

- \$850 for Opera Iowa performance
- \$1,520 for music storage cabinets
- \$217 for Baptismal bibles
- \$663 for Frolic cabinets
- \$1,100 for a library computer
- \$1,229 for the office innovation lab
- \$1,530 for a hearing assistant system
- \$2,200 for third floor windows

Other Awards:

- \$1,500 for Misindo school uniforms
- \$400 for Grace Kids Care – Fun without wheels
- \$200 for Girl Scout Troop #296 food pantry
- \$300 for Kaden's Kloset – clothing for foster care
- \$600 for Kiwanis Club – ISU extension cooking class
- \$500 for From the Hearts Quilts – weighted blankets

A total of \$12,879 was awarded. Requests for grants totaled \$21,516.

Since inception, the Endowment fund has awarded a total of **\$318,129** to **174** projects.

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

Election of Endowment Fund Committee Members

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

We thank Aaron Page for his service on the Endowment Fund Committee.

Nominees for 2019 include: Stacie Holst (agreed to run for a second term) & McKenzie Carney. McKenzie is currently working at Ruby VanMeter school. Her passion is helping people with disabilities. McKenzie is the oldest daughter of Mike and Susanne Carney, long-term members of Grace. McKenzie was a star athlete at Roosevelt High School and Luther College.

Report of the Finance Committee

Grace Lutheran Church

The Church results were above budget in 2018. Overall, a deficit of \$402 was incurred as compared to a \$10,000 deficit budget projection. These breakeven results were a result of strong year-end giving. 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 \$13,000.
- * Easter, Christmas and other income were above budget by \$4,000.
- * Overall, expenses were \$7,000 above budget. This was due to utilities, maintenance and property improvements over budget a combined \$18,000, offset by numerous operating expenses under budget.
- * Certain significant projects during the year were funded with Malmin monies, property reserves and Endowment grants and are not included in these operating results.

Budgeted activity for 2019 reflects breakeven operation. Highlights include the following:

- * Pledged offering activity is below 2018 actual activity.
- * Staffing costs are comparable to 2018. Total staffing costs are approximately \$258,000 and represent 59% 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 is unchanged from 2018.
- * The activity for debt service reflects interest only on the Endowment debt. The terms for the \$275,000 debt is an interest only (3%) note with no principal payments required till 12/31/2021.
- * In order to achieve a balanced budget, many staffing and operational costs were held constant or reduced from committee requests. Certain unfunded requests are hoped to be funded through use of Thrivent dollars and Endowment requests.

Grace Daycare

Grace Daycare reflected losses for many years. Changes in Daycare management have included a much greater focus on financial operations, which resulted in breakeven operations in 2017 and a surplus of \$1,468 in 2018. Budgeted activity for 2019 reflects profitable activity. Careful future financial management is essential as management again changes and cash surplus is minimal.

Your Finance Committee,

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

Reflections on understanding a living and vital faith

In Mark 12:28 Jesus is asked by a scribe: "Which commandment is first of all?" Jesus responded with "the Lord is one," and went on to say, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30). These words are very similar to those that served as Israel's central confession of faith (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). Joshua (22:5) later reminded the people of Israel to observe these words. With this text as a guide, how do we begin to explore the ways we will nurture a living and vital faith in each person and the congregation?

Within the work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, congregational vitality is defined as "communities of Jesus where there are life-changing relationships with God, one another and the world." These are three important dimensions of our work together. But it is the way in which we bring our heart, soul, mind and strength into our life and work that shows how the light of Christ shines in and through us. Our heart is the way we feel and sense God's presence in and through emotions. The soul is our mindful awareness of the presence of God within us and the world. This awareness encourages us to find meaning and purpose in life, both individually and as a community of faith. The mind is how we learn our beliefs, perspectives and practices that shape our understanding, knowledge and expressions of faith. And strength is the way we use our abilities, passions and skills to shape and live a life of faith.

The vitality of our faith as Christians, and as a church in the Lutheran tradition, finds meaning and purpose in Jesus' words from Mark 12:30. As we engage our strategic directions for the future, we find both power and insight by reflecting on what brings us vitality. Please consider the following:

Heart

- When are the times you feel or sense God is present?
- How are these experiences different when you are with others rather than alone?
- How do these emotions bring vitality to your faith and relationship with God?

Soul

- What Scripture passages give you an awareness of life or "living faith"?
- How does this awareness of a living faith help you find meaning and purpose in life?
- What about your life experiences brings a sense of vitality to your faith?

Mind

- What motivates you to continue growing in your relationship with God?
- What have you found helps you learn more about God?
- Where do you find vitality through your learnings and spiritual practices?

Strengths

- What God-given abilities, passions and skills have you discovered in your life?
- How does your faith guide you in using these?
- What about using these abilities, passions and gifts gives you vitality?

May your responses to these questions help you gain new insight and vitality into your relationship with God, each other and the world.