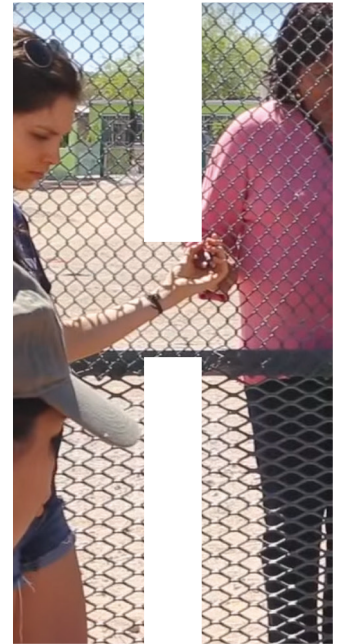




**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.



# ANNUAL REPORT

2019





## A message from ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

Dear friends in Christ,

Stepping out in faith can be difficult. Martin Luther did it in 1517. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America did it at the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. This church can be bold and daring because of our scriptural and Lutheran confessional understandings. Is it easy?

No. Do we always get it right? Probably not. Where we are in error, may God correct us.

The cross is our center. Faith, grace and Scripture alone are our guides. We are church. We are compelled by the gospel and our understanding that in Christ we have been set free to love and serve the neighbor. This loving and serving of our neighbor alongside courageous and faithful leaders is what offers hope to congregations.

Over the past 18 months we have made significant strides in our work on congregational vitality. This church has multiplied its efforts and leveraged its resources to enhance vitality in congregations. Our vision continues to evolve around strengthening our relationships with God, each other and the neighbors we serve. In this way we are addressing both local and global issues by being present in our own community and proactive with issues in the broader church.

This presence is made possible in significant ways through your giving of time, talents and financial resources to our work together. The success of our recent campaign, *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*, reflects the increasing

support for existing and new ministries that serve our communities here at home and others around the globe. Through regular, special and legacy gifts, \$250 million was given to support God's work. Through the spiritual practice of giving, we both acknowledge receiving God's gifts and share in God's generosity by passing on a portion to others. Together we are doing God's work in ways that we could not do otherwise.

As your congregation plans work for the coming year, I hope you will be both bold and daring, remembering God provides and desires abundant life for all. May you continue supporting God's work together with a spirit of solidarity, collaboration and generosity. We are all partners in the gospel, believing in Jesus Christ crucified and risen for the life of the world.

Stepping out in faith together,

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

*"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" —2 Corinthians 5:17*

# Litany

- L. Gathering together as God's people in this place, may we always be aware of your presence in our midst.
- C. Lord, may we always be aware of your presence.
- L. Knowing that the Word is our light, may we continue to grow in our scriptural and confessional understandings.
- C. Lord, may our minds continue to grow in your word.
- L. Recognizing that stepping out in faith is not easy, we ask that you give us strength, O Lord, to listen and be bold and daring.
- C. Lord, give us the patience to listen and the strength to be bold and daring.
- L. While we strive to know ourselves and your will for us, may we build our relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ.
- C. Lord, help us to build faith-filled and healthy relationships with others.
- L. Recognizing that we are often the ones asking, "And who is my neighbor?," may we open our eyes, ears and hearts to all those in the community in which we live.
- C. Lord, may we always be open to those in the community in which we live.
- L. Recognizing the importance of Moses, the prophets and disciples, may we work together to accompany and raise up leaders for your church.
- C. Lord, may we have the insight, encouragement and skills to raise up courageous leaders.
- L. Recognizing the many gifts you have entrusted to us, may we use these gifts to do your work in the world today.
- C. Lord, may we use the gifts entrusted to us to do your work.

## God of Tempest, God of Whirlwind



1 God of tem - pest, God of whirl - wind, as on Pen - te -  
 2 God of blaz - ing, God of burn - ing, all that blocks your  
 3 God of earth - quake, God of thun - der, shake us loose from  
 4 God of pas - sion, God un - sleep - ing, stir in us love's

cost de - scend! Drive us out from shel - tered com - fort;  
 pur - pose, purge! Through your church, Christ's liv - ing Bod - y,  
 leth - ar - gy! Break the chains of sin a - sun - der,  
 rest - less - ness! Where the peo - ple cry in an - guish,

past these walls your peo - ple send! Sweep us in - to cost - ly ser - vice,  
 let your flam - ing Spir - it surge! Where de - ceit con - ceals in - jus - tice,  
 for earth's heal - ing set us free! Crum - ble walls that still di - vide us;  
 may we share your heart's dis - tress. Rouse us from con - tent with e - vil;

there with Christ to bear the cross, there with Christ to bear the cross!  
 kin - dle us to speak your truth, kin - dle us to speak your truth!  
 make us one in Christ our Lord, make us one in Christ our Lord!  
 claim us for your king - dom's work, claim us for your king - dom's work!

Text: Herman G. Stuempfle

Music: John Hughes

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- L. Let us pray. As we strive to be your church of the present and the future, may we nurture a spirit of collaboration and solidarity. May we all be partners in sharing the gospel and believing in Jesus Christ crucified and risen for the life of the world.
- C. Amen.



## **Agenda**

Call to Order

Devotions

Adoption of Agenda

Statistical Information.....Pages 2,3

Minutes from 2019 Annual Meeting.....Page 4

Council President's Report.....Page 5

Pastor's Report.....Page 6

Staff Reports.....Pages 7-11

Committee Reports.....Pages 12-26

Election of voting members for 2020 Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly  
Friday, May 1, 2020 – Sunday, May 3, 2020 Coralville, IA  
Nominees: Carter and Carol Woodruff

Election of Council Members & Endowment Committee Members..Page 25 & insert

Balance Sheets and Income Statements

Budget Adoption

Adjournment

Lord's Prayer

**Grace Lutheran Church Congregational Council**

Term Expires  
February 2020

Bruce Bergman  
Don Peterson  
Cheryl Weatherington  
Barbara Zimany

Term Expires  
February 2021

Aaron Brandsfield  
Tammy Denton  
Carter Woodruff  
Dean Watson\*

Term Expires  
February 2022

Susanne Carney  
David Gronert  
Sally Preston  
John Roehrick

\*serving 2-yr-term vacated by Connie Heuton

**2019 Executive Committee**

Bruce Bergman  
Aaron Brandsfield  
Tammy Denton  
Dave Gronert

**Congregational Officers**

President	Bruce Bergman
Vice President	Aaron Brandsfield
Secretary	David Gronert
Treasurer	Tom Selander
Financial Secretary	Paul Kallenbach

**Grace Lutheran Church Staff  
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.)*

Harriett Pearson	01-10-2019
Lolita Huth	01-22-2019
Larry (Achmed) Johnson	01-27-2019
LeRoi Beers	02-03-2019
Cynthia Wheeler	02-12-2019
Lee Johnson	04-26-2019
Randy Taylor	05-23-2019
Gayle Olson	06-05-2019
Dorothy Jensen	06-26-2019
Mary Donnenwerth	09-03-2019
John Farver	09-12-2019
Shirley Dyson	10-25-2019
Dennis Rehder	10-25-2019

## Membership Statistics

	<u>Baptized</u>	<u>Confirmed</u>
<b>Membership end of 2018</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>603</b>
as reported in the Congregational Report to the ELCA		
Members removed during 2019		
by death	13	13
by transfer to other congregations or other reasons	5	4
Members received during 2019		
by baptism	8	
by transfer fr other congregations by affirmation of faith	9	9
baptized youth confirmed in 2018		5
<b>Membership end of 2018</b>	<b>706</b>	<b>600</b>

### Statistical Report

Worship Services Conducted.....	67
Weddings held at Grace.....	4
Baptisms .....	8
Funerals.....	13
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
Average Sunday worship attendance 2019.....	133

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Jan</b>	404	373	355	341	291	305	250	256	245	215	181	194	185	153	159	142	125
<b>Feb</b>	359	354	305	307	242	314	281	252	212	216	231	199	197	183	172	133	100
<b>Mar</b>	377	388	402	299	315	389	280	263	259	230	264	188	205	255	157	133	140
<b>Apr</b>	507	470	326	399	379	324	342	300	347	289	224	268	270	191	237	192	212
<b>May</b>	363	385	334	336	306	270	250	236	216	219	190	190	166	185	157	148	140
<b>Jun</b>	353	340	295	312	299	251	218	187	195	198	156	167	166	150	153	125	116
<b>July</b>	349	293	296	277	272	242	192	169	199	174	159	164	149	141	128	112	110
<b>Aug</b>	332	313	297	277	252	260	245	155	196	188	165	170	162	153	130	126	127
<b>Sept</b>	397	376	333	292	298	263	245	219	206	181	165	196	187	178	151	134	121
<b>Oct</b>	428	439	398	341	299	321	266	247	225	215	209	213	203	175	165	134	128
<b>Nov</b>	382	360	326	309	307	302	291	235	237	211	241	206	205	184	168	135	135
<b>Dec</b>	380	319	319	394	265	269	238	206	210	208	176	198	197	202	229	165	138

**Grace Lutheran Church  
Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes  
January 27, 2019**

The meeting was called to order by Congregation President John Roehrick at 10:25 AM.

Pastor Mike Schmidt led the assembly in devotions with a reading from Hebrews 12, followed by comments. When God disciplines us we should think of it in terms of a parent training a child out of love. God wants what is best for us. Then we are well trained for our run through life. After prayer the assembly then sang an opening hymn and went through the litany found in the annual report.

Rich Snyder was appointed Parliamentarian.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to adopt the agenda as corrected (date discrepancy).

It was moved, seconded, and passed to adopt the minutes of the 2018 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 2018 Annual Report. There were no questions concerning these reports, and they were approved by unanimous consent.

The assembly was directed to review the 2020 Committee report as printed in the 2018 Annual Report. There were no questions concerning this report, and it was approved by unanimous consent.

There were no questions concerning the Staff Reports, and they were approved as printed in the 2018 Annual Report by unanimous consent.

There were no questions concerning the Committee Reports, and they were approved as printed in the 2018 Annual Report by unanimous consent.

A suggestion was made that the Annual Report booklet needs to be available several days earlier so that the Congregation has ample time to go through it and read these reports prior to the Annual Meeting. It was explained that due to inclement weather, an increase in workload due to the resignation of the Daycare Director, and the late submission of some of the reports the office was unable to publish the booklet earlier this year.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to elect Denny Rehder to serve as one of two voting members for the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly to be held May 10th and 11th, 2019, in West Des Moines, Iowa. The second voting member position will be appointed by Church Council.

In the absence of objection Staci Holst and McKenzie Carney were elected to serve on the Endowment Committee.

John Roehrick, Sally Preston, Susanne Carney, and Dave Gronert were elected by unanimous consent to serve on the Church Council, terms to expire February 2022.

Kevin Krause presented the Financial Report and 2019 budget. He reported that the 2018 budget finished the year with a \$402 deficit, (which is essentially breakeven) due to an increase in year-end giving. He reported a decline in revenues due to decreased membership and the number of pledging units, however he noted an increase in average giving. The 2019 budget is balanced. There were two questions concerning the 2019 budget:

1. Why were utility costs higher last year? Kevin explained the increase as being due to franchise fees, weather, and increased snow removal.

2. If necessary, could the church obtain a line of credit from a bank? Kevin answered that it should be possible for the church to obtain such a line of credit if needed. The Daycare, however, probably could not do so. However, there is discussion in Council concerning other means of obtaining a line of credit for the Daycare.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to adopt the 2019 budget as presented and printed in the Annual Report.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to adopt the 2019 Grace Kids Care budget as presented and printed in the Annual Report.

President Roehrick thanked Kevin Krause, Denise Friesth, and the members of the Finance Committee for their hard work and dedication in putting together the 2019 budgets.

There being no further questions and no new business, it was moved, seconded, and passed to adjourn the meeting at 11:12 AM, followed by the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted, David F. Gronert Congregational Secretary

### **Report from the Congregational Council President Bruce Bergman**

2019 has been an interesting and challenging year for Grace Lutheran Church.

- Financial issues dominated much of the work by the congregational council in 2019. Not surprisingly, our church infrastructure showed signs of aging in 2019, resulting in an unexpectedly large amount of capital expense, well beyond the budgeted amount. We are fortunate that our Property Committee and the Men's Group have dealt with the many issues, which included boiler repair, basement flooring and new HVAC, and also that our congregational giving in 2019 exceeded the budgeted amount. The Council recognized that there is a need to deal with the capital requirements of our church building on a long term basis, and has appointed both a Capital Campaign Committee and a Steering Committee to provide leadership for the Capital Campaign, and to create a long term plan which will be presented to our congregation in 2020.
- Pastor Schmidt took his scheduled sabbatical, from May 20 through August 19. The sabbatical experience allowed him to affirm Grace Lutheran Church's commitment to our shared ministry and returning to his role as pastor feeling renewed. We were very fortunate that Pastor Greg Davis was able to serve our congregation in Pastor Schmidt's absence through three very busy months, and to have an experienced staff who were able to deal with the many issues, normal and unexpected, throughout the sabbatical period.
- This year Grace Kids Care transitioned to new leadership, as Mary Edwards accepted the director's position. The Council has been very pleased with her leadership and organizational skills, resulting in full enrollment, full staffing and a positive financial outlook moving forward.
- Among many challenges of 2019, there were some heartening success stories.
  - Due in no small part to the leadership of Mary Edwards, Grace Kids Care is now able to offer health insurance to the daycare employees.
  - Facing a recommended denial of a needed city permit to locate the Little Free Pantry, Pastor Mike and Don Peterson were able to persuade the Board of Adjustment to grant the permit by a vote of 7-0.
- Grateful thanks are due to Pastor Mike for his leadership, to our staff for all they do – Denise Friesth, Ellen Rothweiler, Emma Stammer, Michelle Voelker, Rich Snyder and Jessica Flannery, and to the members of the Grace congregational council for their devoted service.



## Pastor's Report 2019

“The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.”  
Isaiah 40:8

With the turn of the calendar, we find ourselves in a new decade. This has sparked a great deal of reminiscing and has even prompted the “10-year challenge” and “Decade in Review” that have circled around social media. In reflecting on all that has taken place in 2019, I cannot help but see the year through that same decade in review lens. There has been a lot that has happened in the church, and more specifically at Grace during this last decade.

The 2010s began with a transition. Pastor David Cline retired, and the decade began with the search process for a new pastor. During this first year the congregation was able to enjoy and learn from Interim Pastor Timothy Johnson. This was a healthy time for the congregation following the faithful tenure of Pastor David Cline. Grace continued to learn how to adapt to having one pastor. By the conclusion of this first year, and several interviews later, the following year began with a vote to extend a call to the next pastor.

I was (and continue to be) excited for the opportunity to serve as pastor of Grace Lutheran Church. There were big shoes to fill, but these big shoes come with a community of faith that truly embodies Grace. I continue to be thankful to be part of such a special, accepting, and welcoming community of faith.

When looking at each year individually it starts to look like the same song and same verse (or a slightly updated verse). This year would not really be any different. We have seen some of the same struggles with costs to maintain the physical plant which caused us to finish the year with a deficit. There was rather solid giving and good stewardship of those resources which allowed us to make up \$20,000 worth of those unexpected expenses. We continue to struggle with worship attendance in a pursuit of years past.

What we start to see as we look at the last decade is a community of faith that is living into its values and mission statement. I watch from the chancel as guests look around when a loud “Hallelujah, Pastor!” bursts forth during worship, only to see that the community of faith is accepting, and even embracing, of the moment. The value of Acceptance is something that is part of the very DNA of Grace Lutheran Church. Whether similar moments or changes in Wedding Policy to be completely inclusive, we continue to grow in that radical hospitality of Christ.

The Prayer life of the community of faith has gone from the attitude that we are not allowed to have a Prayer List to not only raising people in prayer, but an active Prayer Quilt Ministry, a Centering Prayer Group, and Centering Prayer in worship. We continue to grow in our living out this prayer as the Visiting Friends and Member Care groups put actions with our prayers for those in need. We have made significant growth in the prayer life of the community of faith and continue to find ways to improve.

There were intentional changes to the Sunday morning schedule to impact the overall sense of Fellowship. The move to one service was not taken lightly, and we continue to see positive energy on Sunday mornings and the overall sense of community continues to improve. The changes to the Gathering Hall helped in that sense of Fellowship, but we continue to assess and find ways to improve.

The value of Discipleship continues to guide much of what we do with Outreach and Education. The work of the Well-Being Task Force led the charge to look within and our own financial, spiritual, physical and mental health before reaching out to others. The move into a Service-Learning mode of Education and the evolution into Active Grace continues to build our value of Discipleship. This has also intersected with growth and dedication of other ministries such as LWR, First Circle Friends, Member Care, Visiting Friends, Hunger Working Team, and Prayer Quilt Ministry. Nearly all of those began in the last decade of ministry.

There is an old saying “You are not better every time, but over time you are better.” As I look at the work that we do together as Grace Lutheran Church I find this saying to be very true. There are not drastic changes from year to year but looking at the last decade we have made significant improvements in “guiding people to live differently through Christ.” I look forward to seeing what our future holds.

In Christ,  
Pastor Mike

## **Report from the Minister for Youth and Family 2019**

### **Ellen Rothweiler**

As the church we are called to share the Good news of Jesus Christ. For children, youth and families that Good News may be that God offers peace that passes understanding, that they are not alone in the busyness of life and the grace abounds in the midst of their messy lives. The way this good news is shared continues to evolve as we seek to meet families wherever they find themselves in their faith journey. Here are some ways we walked with these families in the last year-

#### -Preschool and Elementary VBS

This year we used Vacation Bible School Curriculum offered through ELCA World Hunger. The theme was "Who is my Neighbor" and using the story of "The Good Samaritan" children learned about neighbors across the world in countries like Malawi and Colombia. 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. We adjusted our schedule from five to three full days for our K-5 VBS week and heard that families missed the extra days. We will respond to this feedback as resources allow, hoping to add another day back into this ministry. 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.

#### -Confirmation

We have continued with the parent leader model in Sixth and Seventh grade Confirmation in 2019 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 and the second half learning in small groups with a parent leader. This fall our smaller class size has allowed for more group discussion and a greater emphasis on the questions our students bring. We are using problem based learning curriculum from Sparkhouse called Colaborate and have studied and discussed The New Testament We also added a four week unit on prayer in the Spring, experimenting with different prayer practices and taking time for solitude and 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 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.

#### Active Grace Sunday School

We continue to pursue a Service Learning approach to Sunday School. Service Learning is an intentional four step process; Preparation, Action, Reflection and Celebration. Continuing with themes to guide our learning children and families practice living out the lessons scripture teaches us in daily life through service to others. This fall we responded to the reality of diminished attendance and offered education opportunities just twice a month including a family friendly worship service that was well-received. We heard from families that they were missing the weekly opportunity to gather for learning, so in 2020 we will move back to a weekly model.

We continue to adapt and adjust to the realities of life with children and youth. This means taking risks and trying new things, all the while listening to hear if we are still meeting the faith formation needs of our flock.

This work is important and sacred, and I am blessed to be a part of the lives of Grace families.

Peace,

Ellen Rothweiler

## **Report from the Director of Communications Michelle Voelker**

We had a lot of 'new' in 2017 and 2018, including the updated website and the electronic street sign. 2019 has mostly been continuing to communicate in ways that we know works, and fine tuning other things.

I am grateful to work with such an amazing, compassionate, flexible staff. I enjoy continuing to study and explore the Enneagram together - as we each come to understand more about ourselves we are also understanding more of each other and how we work best together.

We continue to publish:

- Weekly Announcements, electronic newsletter and website news.
- The monthly Friendly Visitor, which is also provided to Grace Kids Care families, sent to our Homebound members, and published on our Facebook page. Issues are archived and available on the website. Deadlines continue to be an issue, which can hold up printing and mailing. Deadlines for submissions are on or about the 22<sup>nd</sup> of each month for the following month's issue.

### **Street Sign**

The electronic street sign had a bit of a hiccup with a bad receiver but was easily fixed by us (myself and the willing workers with a screwdriver on a very cold day). We have had a few contacts through the year where people have mentioned seeing an event or worship on the sign.

### **Facebook**

Facebook continues to be a good tool for promoting events at Grace and building a connection with the community – sharing and promoting community events builds goodwill, as well as promotes familiarity with our logo. Sharing photos of our events helps people see who we are before they stop in. Some of our events receive a large number of likes, and some of those people, when invited, “like” Grace, which extends our audience. If you see one our posts, please share it – you never know when someone will see help they need, or find a connection to their local community.

### **Advertising**

We are focusing more on neighborhood advertising, placing ads in Beaverdale Living for December and January, following a lovely article they published about Grace and Active Grace in October.

We will continue to place ads - although smaller - with the Register for Easter and Christmas as long as they continue to have a dedicated worship section.

### **Website**

Newsletters, Bulletins, and a few weeks' worth of announcements are archived on the website in the Resources section.

We continue to update the news weekly, list events on the website Calendar, and update committee and program information as it changes, so that it is up to date as we continue to promote the website through all of the above methods.

## **Report from the Minister for Administration Denise Friesth**

Life here at Grace Lutheran Church as Church Administrator is good. Other words that could describe life in my role is: satisfying and challenging! No two days in the office are the same and that probably suits me best. I enjoy my colleagues, members, visitors, vendors, community members, and more.

My tasks include:

- Accounts Payable, Payroll (GLC and GKC),
- Facility use and maintenance
- Custodial supervision
- Calendar Management
- Contact person for vendors and outside groups
- Review of contracts
- Account reconciliation
- Office day to day operations
- Providing general administrative support
- Updating People module in ACS and the online directory
- Grace Kids Care: Accounts Payable, Payroll, Employee Data Base Management, Facility maintenance, Kangarootime Administration for Billing/Payments/Deposits, and overall support for GKC management.

In addition, some out-of-the-ordinary parts of 2019:

- Pastor Mike's 3-month Sabbatical and Pastor Davis covering pastoral care
- Support from Executive Team – especially during sabbatical
- Inaugural Grace Car Show in June!!
- Support of Finance Team - especially with overall decision and month-end
- Member Care – busy team that is a blessing to so many
- Prayer Quilt Ministry – again, busy team, but such a blessing!
- Leading Inaugural Advent by Candlelight

Some ongoing areas of concern – most already being addressed:

- Facility Use and the implications
- Building Security
- HVAC – maintenance
- Roof leaks
- Restrooms – in nasty condition or ongoing odor issues
- Facility Cleanliness
- Personnel Policy – will help track benefits more efficiently
- More on the to-do-list than time available

Respectfully submitted by  
*Denise Friesth, church administrator*

**Report from the Worship & Music Ministry**  
**Emma Stammer**

2019 was an eventful year for worship and music at Grace. Highlights include:

- Hosting a Gustavus Adolphus band and orchestra concert.
- The completion of the additions and upgrades to the organ.
- Welcoming Pastor Gregory as pulpit supply while Pastor Mike was on sabbatical.
- Continued use of the gallery walls in the Gathering Hall for art sales, ministry displays, and worship themes.
- Implementation of a new Sunday morning education format, Active Grace, with worship and service-learning opportunities.
- Formation of a steering committee and fundraising committee to plan for an upcoming capital campaign to raise funds to address property needs at Grace.
- Hosting the Southwest Iowa Community College Chamber Choir for their Christmas program.
- Ongoing weekly chapel time with Grace Kids Care.

Updates from the music ministry:

- The paid section leader program for the Chancel Choir, funded from the Malmin bequest, has come to an end. There have been both positive and negative aspects to welcoming the new singers into the choir for the past 3 years, but based on feedback from volunteer choir and congregation members I made the decision to not request the funding be rolled into the operating church budget.
- Grace Bells has an updated rehearsal schedule which has made a huge difference in participation. The ensemble has really been revitalized the past year and it is such a joy to work with all the ringers.
- I requested an endowment grant to replace choir music that was ruined in 2018 when the basement flooded. That money was used to both purchase replacement anthems and new music based on the evolving needs of the current Chancel Choir. Additional music storage was needed as well.
- Chancel Choir, Grace Bells, and Grace Brass all participated a great deal in 2019 Advent and Christmas worship services and fellowship events.

A special note of thanks: the worship and music ministry at Grace relies on many many volunteers, and their efforts and support are vital and MUCH appreciated! Thank you!

In Christ,

**Emma Stammer**

*Minister for Worship & Music*

**Report from the Director of Grace Kids Care**  
**Mary Edwards**

2019 has been a busy year with **lots** of growth and changes at Grace Kids Care! We currently have a roster of 48 students aged 6 weeks through 5 years. We have 5 classrooms and a staff of 18 full- and part-time employees. I began my tenure as the new Director on January 28<sup>th</sup> and feel that we have built a lot of positive momentum that should keep going for us in 2020!

Turnover for students and staff was very high at the beginning of the year. Much of this was due to the uncertainty of the future of the center while there was not a director, an uncertainty which continued for a

couple of months after I started. We operated on low enrollment and employment numbers this summer, but we are at a healthy capacity now. We ended the year with a surplus of \$14,485.

### **A few of the big achievements of the year:**

**Reach for the Stars Grant:** This spring I applied for and received a \$3000 Reach for the Stars Grant which was awarded to us by Childcare Resource & Referral of Central Iowa. We purchased multiple pieces of furniture (multiple shelving units and 2 professional grade changing tables) and numerous learning materials with these funds.

**Quality Rating Scale:** This summer we received a Quality Rating Score 1 with the state of Iowa. Having a QRS 1 rating increases our reimbursement for families receiving state childcare assistance. For our 5 current students on state assistance, this is an increase of approximately \$4,500/year from the state.

**Health Care:** On July 1 GKC began offering health insurance benefits for full-time staff. Grace Kids Care offers \$200 per month toward a silver or gold plan through United Healthcare. We currently have 3 full-time staff utilizing our health care benefits. GKC spending for this line item was far under-budget this year due to low staff enrollment numbers (Brooke had previously budgeted for up to 10 staff).

**DHS Visit:** Our DHS licensing consultant made his annual unannounced visit on July 16. We passed our visit with a few minor corrections to make. All DHS childcare reports are available to the public, and ours was sent out to parents for the sake of transparency.

### **Room Renovations This Summer:**

- **Room 101:** After our DHS visit Room 101 was officially licensed for use and we have moved our 2-year-old "Explorers" class into the space. Its licensed capacity is 22. Recommendations are to not more than double the "ratio" in a classroom for any age group, so we have this room capped at 12 2-year-olds and 2 full-time staff with a ratio of 1:6.
- **Room 108 (Tiny Tots):** After painting, re-waxing the floors, installation of curtains and carpet transition strips, our 1-year-old class ("Tiny Tots") moved into this space. The room's licensed capacity is 11 but is capped at 8 1-year-olds and 2 full-time staff with a ratio of 1:4.
- **Room 107 (Staff Room):** This room is currently being used as a teacher workspace. It has been great to have a place to work and collaborate together!

**New Policy Handbook:** I finished revising our policy handbook and sent it out to parents at the beginning of August. The prior handbook had some inconsistencies and did not clearly outline some of the rules we are required to follow by DHS. Many of our updates came from the DHS standards for licensing and from *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs*.

**Fundraiser:** This fall we held a SaveAround coupon book fundraiser and will designate funds toward building security improvements. Building security is by far the biggest concern that I continue to hear from parents. This fundraiser raised more than \$900 which we hope to utilize soon!

**Grace Church Saturday Men's Group and Willing Workers Group** have been involved with multiple maintenance projects which have benefited the daycare, including stripping and re-waxing the floors in 2 classrooms, cleaning the heating registers, equipment maintenance, shelf installation, replacing several outlets, painting, and hanging bulletin boards. We are **very** appreciative of their help and are glad to have a good working partnership with them!

**Moving Forward:** Our next steps for improvement include getting on the Child and Dependent Adult Food Program (CACFP), a federal reimbursement program which could save us close to \$9,000 per year. I have applied for a GLC Endowment Fund Grant and a CCR&R Reach for the Stars Grant, and continue to look for ways to focus more of our funds on our staff and our students while continuing to offer affordable daycare for the community.

**THANK YOU** to the countless members of the congregation who have offered their time, money, and support as I began my journey here at Grace Kids Care. I am so thankful to be a part of this community and I look forward to seeing what the future brings!

Mary Edwards  
Director of Grace Kids Care

## Altar Guild

The Altar Guild members at Grace prepare the altar for Sunday worship, assist with communion and clean up. Other responsibilities include any additional preparation for special events such as, Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, baptisms, and funerals.

Members handle the care and maintenance of the paraments, linens, banners, and candles. 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
- Seasonal supplies and decorations

A smaller group is designated for handling funerals. These are volunteers that will help to prepare for the services as needed to meet the requests of the families for the worship space.

The members have 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 were thirteen volunteers that served on Altar Guild for 2019. We will have ten that will continue their service for 2020.

Thank You To:

1. The Willing Workers for their assistance throughout the year.
2. The 2019 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.

Altar Guild Receipts (Contributions for altar flowers/lilies/poinsettias)	\$2,443 (budget \$2,500)
Altar Flowers Expense (Expense for flowers paid to Irene's)	\$2,934 (budget \$2,700)
Altar Guild Supplies (Expenses – Communion supplies, etc.)	\$ 896 (budget \$1,800)

Candelabra alternatives will be discussed in 2020 with a smaller group and Pastor Mike.

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

## Report from the Social Ministry Committee

In 2019 the Social Ministry Committee participated in or sponsored the following activities/events:

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Gail Peterson, Chairman/Secretary  
Social Ministry Committee members: Sandy Briggs, Joie Gronert, Jane Ridnour, and Barb Zimany.

## **Report from Cradle Roll**

The Cradle Roll program ministers to parents with children between the ages of birth through age three.

“Splash!” materials from Augsburg Fortress press are used. Each month the parents receive a “Parent Page” appropriate for the age of their child. A music CD is included with the first parent page and again at the child’s 1st and 2nd birthdays. The materials are supplemented with additional materials at Christmas, Easter and the child’s third birthday.

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

Six children were baptized during 2019. At the time of baptism, the parents are presented with a 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

In September, six of the children aged out of the program. Their parents were sent letters inviting them to participate in Active Grace with their child.

Expenses include “Splash!” materials, postage, mailing and supplemental materials.

2019 Budget: \$450.00

Expenditures:\$446.26

Respectfully submitted,  
Gail Peterson  
Cradle Roll Coordinator

## **Report from the Stewardship Committee**

The Stewardship committee met with Ellen in August to coordinate with Active Grace which planned a stewardship focus for the fall. Some members of our group participated in an Active Grace Stewardship activity put on by a member of Thrivent Financial.

Pledge cards were received during worship on Stewardship Sunday, October 13, 2019. Thank you, Pastor Mike, for your focus on stewardship during worship.

Pledges received for the year 2020 are higher than for 2019. We are grateful for all the stewardship support of Grace Lutheran Church.

Sincerely,  
Howard Kulzer  
Additional members of the Stewardship Team: Norm Iverson, Tim Nelson, & Jay Wangerin



## **Report from the Companion Congregation Committee**

This has been a meaningful ministry of two churches learning from each other. Msindo and Mararo are two villages, near Same, Tanzania, which the Bishop assigned us to be companions. There are only two remaining members of the original committee and we need new people!! You can go to Africa or not, it isn't required. If this ministry is to continue, we desperately need people. If you are at all interested in communicating and interacting with our Companion Congregation, please contact Mary Freimuth Helt or Jane Ridnour. We want this ministry to continue but cannot do it alone.

For many years we have contributed to their scholarship fund and in building a new church office. We need to do some fund-raising to help finish the office. We need to assist Empower Tanzania (an independent offshoot of our companions which started a school support group in our village to help poor and orphan students.)

This year, 2019, we lost our "founding father", Denny Rehder, and miss him deeply. He would be very sad if we cease this ministry now.

**Please consider ways you could be a part of our Companion Congregation Committee.**

*Recent communication from Tanzania:*

### **EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN TANZANIA PARE DIOSECE- MSINDO PARISH**

***Mary Freimuth Helt, Secretary of Congregation Committee  
Companion Grace Lutheran Church of Des Moines, IA, USA.***

Beloved in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We received your greetings we are grateful, says relations committee, the God of peace and love to continue to strengthen our relationship, he protects us and enabling us all.

We're sorry to hear about the tragedy of brothers, our dear friend Denny Rehder who suffered from cancer and died a sudden death, is the way all of us, we get rid with someone important in our relationship, we will remember him. We are delighted to hear that he got a grandson Zeppelin. We are enjoyed to hear he saw his grandson and enjoyed him. This was important to him, though he is dead. Sorry (in swahili we say POLE) to Kelly, Kathy and Zeppelin. We give you the *pole* for health problems that happened to you, God heal you.

We appreciate that you continue to remember here about Saturday School at Msindo, this is good news for us and those students through Empower Tanzania. We appreciate your efforts to support education of our students, but for the finishing of the office building of our Parish.

Congratulations for multiple functions you doing with Pastor David Cline, say hello to him. We are also happy to hear about the new members, the week of vacation Bible for children; and the desire of young families wanting to build a big modern house, even us.

The weather for us is a good to agriculture and crops are growing well. But also floods have damaged many roads, houses and young people of school for various areas in Tanzania have died, others have been injured. One family from Dar Es Salam died father, mother and their two children who were going to the graduation of their daughter in Tanga. Rain and thunder have affected housing and some people were injured by lightning (thunder).

This year we have different events in the church, singing, children's festival, ordination. Some events I should sent to you the images. The companionship at Msindo say welcome, welcome, and welcome. **Do you have a program to come at Msindo year 2020?** Forgive us for our language isn't good, because we speaking swahili and Pare language for long time, so!

May God of love, blessing and protecting all of you in the Jesus Christ,

***Pastor. Amos Mrutu and Chairman of the Committee Mbagu Azza***

## **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 7 enrolled, ended the year with 6 enrolled, but had 5 enrolled for the majority of the year. 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, including one this year who had been with us for quite some time. We also this year suffered the death of one participant who had been with us since nearly the beginning of our program.

We have continued to have only three lead volunteers who plan and implement the program including games, crafts, and food. Although LSI provided some assistance during the year, that was for the most part eliminated in October when our liaison had surgery. She hopes to be back with us in January. LSI does continue to do intake for new participants; however, word of mouth from our existing participants' care givers is the most effective way of referring new participants. The appreciative comments and notes we receive from the care providers truly make our volunteer hours worthwhile. We are very grateful to Thrivent Financial and the Grace members who have designated their Thrivent dollars to go to our program, allowing us to continue operating. Each participant pays LSI \$45 to attend a session, for which we receive \$10. LSI also charges us a \$400 fee for use of the First Circle Friends name and format, similar to a franchise fee.

We lost two long-time volunteers this year but were grateful to have one additional person volunteer. We currently have 13 dedicated volunteers (10 of those from Grace). Those numbers include 3 leads, 9 one-on-one volunteers (one of whom also serves 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

## **Grace Fellowship Report for 2019**

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. In December, we have a catered meal by Price Chopper consisting of Turkey, Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Ham Balls, Dressing, Green Bean Casserole, Cranberry Salad, and Dinner Rolls. Guests are invited to attend!

This past year we were entertained by West Des Moines Historical Society, Rich Snyder demonstrating the organ, AARP Fraud Watch, and Advent by Candlelight.

All members of Grace and friends are welcome to attend. We appreciated all the members of the congregation and children who attended the Advent by Candlelight in December.

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

In 2019 we finished adding raised beds to the main garden, with funds donated by several members of the community. Tim Nelson and Mike Peterman selected and picked up lumber. Paul Nelson and Mike Peterman built the raised beds. Rich Snyder also contributed funds for the beds and helped fill them. Paul Nelson, Julie Honsey, and Marion and Gary Nehmer also helped to fill the beds.

Raised beds reduce the amount of bending on aging backs, weeding, eliminated the need to till (and keep/maintain a tiller), reduces soil loss, helps to control moisture, and ease of gardening on aging legs and backs. Thank you, Mike and Carla Peterman for building these!

We also received an endowment grant for the construction of a compost bin system. The bins were designed and built by Rich Voelker and allow us to have easy access to add material, or mix, or remove compost, while keeping it out of view. Garden waste can now be recycled back into the garden as soil. Coffee grounds and produce ONLY waste can be added after your events.

We continue to reassess the productivity of the vegetables and varieties grown and make changes according to popularity and need at the Food Pantries. Sweet potatoes were planted in bins outside of the garden, adding a little bit of fun and green in front of the west side fence. Okra was another new crop that did well.

Produce was harvested from early June through October, two to three times a week, with the majority being shared with local food pantries, and some shared with the congregation on Sundays.

In 2020 we are looking for anyone who would be willing to help harvest, once, or many times, alone, or with one of our gardeners. Gardeners are also welcome, as are drivers who would be willing to pick up harvested vegetables to deliver to the food pantries.

Sincerely,

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

## **Evangelism Committee**

During 2019, the Evangelism Committee continued serving at the Beavertdale Market with our Craft Tent. We don't seem to have gained additional congregation members, but we have established a friendly presence in the neighborhood and entertained many.

We have re-established the greeters' program for Sunday mornings: someone greets everyone who comes through the door; if we meet visitors, we ask for their names in our book and make contact with a letter. If any member chooses to be a greeter, please wear a nametag, greet warmly, ask person to sign the visitors' book, give a Friendly Visitor, tell the visitor you will be around to answer questions after the service. Thanks.

We spent discussion time discerning our purpose and ways to move forward. We welcome new members.

Mary Freimuth Helt

## **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 2019 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.

The Grace Lutheran Church Library had a budget of \$150 for books. The supply budget was \$100.

With our library budget the follow books were purchased:

Adult Books:

"Praying the Psalms"

"Messages of the Psalms"

"Letters to the Church"

"Finding Chika"

"The Human Condition"

"The Naked Now"

"How Happiness Happens"

"The God Who Knows Your Name"

"Have a Little Faith"

The subscription for the magazine, "Gather" was renewed.

Our supply budget was used for the subscription fee for Cross Library Catalog, the library's online catalog and also library supplies.

Respectfully submitted,

Marion Nehmer

## **Lydia/Martha Circle**

Lydia/Martha Circle combined in 2019 and met intermittently to June. In September Helen Ringgenberg, Barb Zimany, and Marilyn Nizzi met and scheduled our fall meeting for October 24, 2019. Members were asked to bring thoughts and ideas to discuss for the future plans for our Circle. At that meeting officers were elected as follows:

Co-chairs: Marilyn Nizzie and Helen Ringgenberg

Secretary: Carol Krause

Treasurer: Martha Mitchell

Plans were made to meet monthly except the November/December meeting will be held in December when the gift bags for the Homebound will be assembled.

This year, 40 gift bags were assembled and delivered with a beautiful poinsettia to our "homebound" members. Lydia/Martha Circle provided several items for the gift bags along with a gift from Grace children and the poinsettias from the congregation. These were delivered by Circle members. We also made a financial donation to Merle Hay Neighborhood Association's Keep the Kids Warm program which provides winter coats, boots and clothing to Moore Elementary School. We also funded the fruit and candy given out at the Christmas Eve service.

We will be meeting the fourth Thursday of the month at 9:30 am in Grace Hall except November/December as noted before. New members are welcome.

Marilyn Nizzi

## **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 ([mnmweather@msn.com](mailto:mnmweather@msn.com)), Martha Mitchell ([iwork4Him@gmail.com](mailto:iwork4Him@gmail.com) 515-491-3062), or Cherie Rissman ([cherierissman@gmail.com](mailto:cherierissman@gmail.com) 515-205-8939).

## **Prayer Quilt Ministry**

The Prayer Quilt Ministry at Grace Lutheran Church was begun in October 2015. On occasion a quilt frame with a quilt is set up in the Sanctuary. Each quilt is finished except for the tying of the knots. Members are invited to tie one of the knots and say a prayer for the recipient and family as they do. The recipient is announced during the service or noted in the written announcements that week. The quilt is then delivered when all the knots have been tied and the recipient will know that each knot represents a prayer for him/her.

A personalized label is made for each quilt and is sewn to the back of the quilt. The label reads as follows:

**This quilt was made for  
(Name)  
with love, hope and prayers from your friends at  
Grace Lutheran Church – (Date)  
As each knot on this quilt was tied,  
a prayer was said especially for you.**

**“Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything  
together in perfect harmony.” Colossians 3:14**

**May you know the love of God, and the love of so many people  
shown in the prayers said in the making of this quilt. Amen**

As of December 2019, the committee has now made 50 quilts that have been tied by Grace members and delivered to the recipients. The committee is very thankful to the congregation and staff for the support of this mission. We are blessed to have financial support from individual members of the congregation, as well as, proceeds from the Easter Morning Pancake Breakfast. This enables us to purchase all new quality fabrics and supplies (approx. \$75.00 per quilt). Each quilt is also washable and dryable.

If you wish to know more about the Prayer Quilt Ministry, have questions, would like to be on the committee, or provide financial support, please contact one of the members of the committee.

Respectfully submitted,  
Helen Ringgenberg, Carol Krause, Gail Peterson

## Member Care

The Member Care Team continues its ministry of providing assistance to Grace members in time of need; illness/surgery or loss of a family member. This may include providing meals, transportation, visits, cards and/or phone calls. In 2019, an average of ten individuals/families were contacted each month. Due to the situation this may be a one-time contact or one that extends over a period of time. This number does not include the numerous Grace homebound that also received visits, phone calls and cards. Grace members may request care from the Member Care Team by contacting Pastor Mike or by calling the church office.

In March, Member Care received \$1,000.00 Thrivent Choice funds from Grace to supplement the budget.

The team wants to thank the organizers of the Grace Car Show held in June for designating Member Care as the recipient of the Car Show profits. The \$967 received will be used to continue the ministry of Member Care.

Member Care was also fortunate to receive a Thrivent Action Team Grant (\$250 Visa gift card and "Live Generously" t-shirts.) The funds were used to purchase 45 Gerber Daisy plants, pots and potting soil. On June 2, Member Care Flower Sunday, the plants were delivered to those on the Grace Prayer List and homebound. We want to thank members of the congregation for assisting in delivering the plants and especially to Lon Friesth for applying for and receiving the Thrivent Action Team Grant for Member Care.

### For 2019:

#### Income

Beginning balance (c/o 2018)	\$ 177.77
Grace Thrivent Choice Funds	\$1,000.00
Receipts from Grace Car Show	\$ 967.00

**Total Income 2019** **\$2,144.77**

#### Expenditures

Supplies/groceries	\$ 324.95
Car Show expenses	\$ 94.57

**Total Expenditures 2019** **\$ 419.52**

#### Donations

Supplies/groceries	\$ 185.45
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**Total expenses/donations  
for 2019** **\$ 604.97**

**12-31-2019 Balance in Member Care Reserve account = \$1725.25**

2019 Member Care Team members

Jill Boeschen, Joie Gronert, Mary Helt, Connie Heuton, Gail Peterson, Jane Ridnour, Melissa Young

## Report from the Lutheran World Relief Team

The Lutheran World Relief team at Grace celebrates a very productive year in 2019. We are grateful to the congregation and staff for the support and actions you have taken to further our mission to provide disaster relief around the world. We create relief kits and quilts that are sent to the LWR warehouse for global distribution in times of need.

### Celebrating:

**Our new quilt room in Msindo Hall.** We appreciate the people who provided sweat equity to clean up and paint the space. Thanks go to the congregation and to individuals who contributed funds for paint and flooring. Additional cleanup was needed when ground water or sewer backup caused water to run across the floor, but quick responses averted damage. Our improved storage system keeps supplies high and dry.

**Congregational awareness raised with spring and fall programs.** Donations totaled \$1807. Thank you for your generosity! A School Kit Challenge netted 18 additional school kits beyond those we purchased.

**New group members and increased multigenerational participation.** Quilting sessions were added on Wednesday nights during Lent and in the fall. Three Sunday morning kit making or quilt related events were held so all could participate. A quilt and kit blessing was held during worship on Oct 13. We now have 11 team members spanning 3 generations.

**Provided aid to assist at least 566 persons impacted by extreme poverty and disasters:** sent to LWR this year: 218 school kits, 61 baby care kits, 228 personal care kits, and 59 quilts and tied fleece blankets.

Thank you from the team: Allison Olson Schmidt, Barb Zimany, Beth Flannery, Cathy Watson, Gail Peterson, Helen Ringgenberg, Jessye Flannery, Jill Boeschen, Kathy Piltingsrud, Lori Fry, Mary Jo McCleary

### Lutheran World Relief Account 2019

BALANCE ON HAND - January 1, 2019 (balance agrees with Church records)	\$ 816.16
<b>INCOME:</b>	
Donations Received (January-June)	594.00
Donations Received (July-December)	<u>1,213.00</u>
Total Income	+ <u>1,807.00</u>
	2,623.16
<b>DISBURSEMENTS:</b>	
Expenses - Spring Drive	396.29
Expenses - Fall Drive	<u>1,613.28</u>
Total Disbursements	- <u>2,009.57</u>
BALANCE ON HAND - December 31, 2019 (balance agrees with Church records)	<u>\$ 613.59</u>

## 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:

- Installation of a new air conditioning system in the lower level classrooms, 101 and 102.
- Repair of the classroom walls in Msindo Hall that were damaged by sewer backup in 2018.
- Installation of new floor tile in Msindo Hall
- Installation of new LED cove lighting in the Chancel above and around the Cross.
- New pew cushions for the Sanctuary to replace longer ones on two new shorter pews.
- New communion rail kneeler cushions.
- Continued periodic roof repairs for the roof and skylights over the Gathering Hall.
- Major expenditures on heating and cooling systems (maintenance and system controls).

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

The Property Committee is grateful for all the property improvements that were funded by the generous Marvin Malmin bequest, under the direction of the Malmin Fund Task Force and the Congregation Council during the past several years. These included major parking lot improvements, new speaker and video systems in the Sanctuary, painting, carpet and improvements in the Sanctuary, Gathering Hall and Main Entry, the installation of the new digital sign, new rubber floor tiles in the gym and numerous other projects.

Unfortunately, there are still a number of important property needs that should be addressed within the next few years. The Congregation Council has established a Capital Campaign Steering Committee and a Capital Campaign Working Committee to make a complete study of capital needs and to develop a plan to generate enough contributions and/or grants to address these needs. The Property Committee has been working with both groups to define all needed work and to obtain associated cost estimates to assist them in preparing their upcoming presentation to the congregation.

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 continue 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. Additional members are welcome!

The Property Committee would like to encourage you to consider joining us in 2020. This would involve 3 or 4 meetings at church, and communication by email on issues that we address as needed.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Peterson, Chair  
Jay Wangerin

Chuck Denton  
Dean Watson

Norm Iverson  
Eric Weber



## Report from the Memorial Fund Committee

All memorial money donated to Grace Lutheran Church is deposited to a 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, 2019 were in memory of:

**Mary Donnenwerth, Shirley Dyson, Dorothy Jensen, Gayle Olson, Denny Rehder and Randy Taylor**, adding a total of \$6,915 to the fund.

Disbursements in 2019 totaled \$2,382. (Sound equipment and cove lighting)

The December 31, 2019 balance in the Memorial reserve account is \$25,958

### Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church Columbarium Fund

As of January 14, 2020  
(Report from Bill Jensen)

Cash Balance of December 24, 2018	\$13,843.60
Receipts:	
Interest on funds	\$ 6.88
Deposits:	
Disbursements:	
Rehder name plate	\$ -263.00
Cash Balance of December 23, 2019	\$13,587.48

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

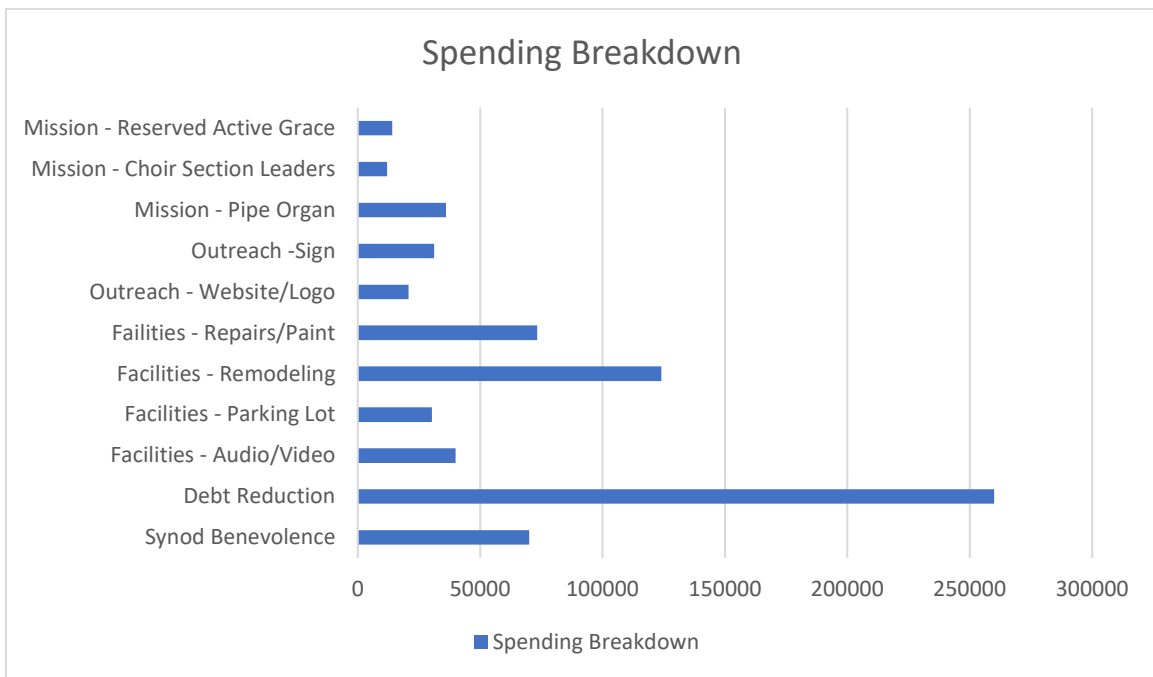
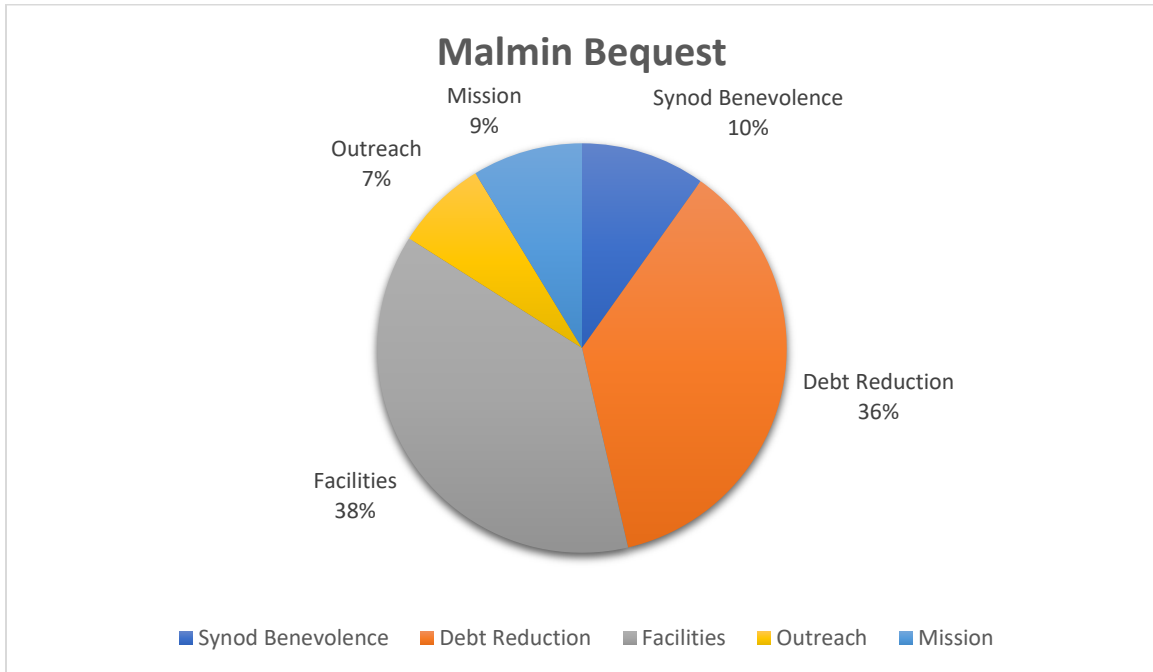
No niches were purchased in 2019.  
Denny Rehder was interred in 2019.

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 2019



(Continued on next page)

## **Report of the Marvin Malmin Fund Task Force for 2019 (continued)**

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, 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.

There were some expenses from the Malmin Fund in 2019. There was a continuation of our website hosting with Happy Medium. There was also the continuation of section leaders for the choir; the section leader program was suspended at the end of the calendar year 2019. Pew cushions for the kneeler and the two pews that were shortened were also purchased. Thru action of council, the \$14,076 that remains in the Malmin Fund is intended to be used by Active Grace needs.

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 2018 income, which was distributed in March of 2019.

Awards to Grace Lutheran Church:

- \$550 for a TV for the Gathering Hall
- \$180 for compost bins/raised beds for Grace Garden
- \$1,800 for music storage cabinets
- \$450 for Busy Bags replacement

Other Awards:

- \$3,400 to Lutheran Lakeside Camp for Dining Hall AV equipment
- \$3,100 to Youth Emergency Services and Shelter for security cameras

A total of \$9,480 was awarded. Requests for grants totaled \$30,531.

Since inception, the Endowment fund has awarded a total of **\$326,123** to **180** projects.

Your Endowment Committee,

Loree Nelson (Chairman), Stacie Holst (Secretary), John Justice, Mark Stumme and McKenzie Carney

### Election of Endowment Fund Committee Members

Members include: Loree Nelson (Chairman), McKenzie Carney, Stacie Holst, John Justice, and Mark Stumme.

We thank Mark Stumme for serving on the Endowment Fund Committee as he completes his second term.

Nominees for 2020 include: John Justice (second term) & Kari Dostalik.

**Report of the Finance Committee  
Grace Lutheran Church**

*Grace Lutheran Church*

The Church results were below budget in 2019. Overall, a deficit of \$9,836 was incurred as compared to a breakeven budget. These results were due to significant maintenance activity (over budget by \$36K) offset by higher income (above budget by \$28K).

Highlights of actual activity include the following:

- Pledged, unpledged and other offerings were above budget by \$25K.
- Overall, expenses were \$38K above budget. This was due almost entirely to maintenance and property improvements (see property report for details).
- Certain projects during the year (choir section leaders) were funded with Malmin funds and are not included in these operating results.

Budgeted activity for 2020 reflects breakeven operation. Highlights include the following:

- Overall, the operating budget is \$15K higher from the prior year budget due to increased pledging. These available funds provided increased compensation for staff and an increased budget for maintenance.
- Pledged offering activity is above 2019 budgeted activity and comparable to 2019 actual activity.
- Staffing costs are comparable to 2019. Total staffing costs are approximately \$260,000 and represent 58% 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 2019.
- The activity for debt service reflects interest only on the debt to the Endowment Fund. This \$275,000 debt has an interest rate of 3% and matures 12/31/2021.

*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 a small surplus of \$1,468 in 2018 and a higher surplus of \$14,485 in 2019. Budgeted activity for 2020 reflects profitable activity.

Your Finance Committee,

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

# Beyond the Wall: Making All Things New



When have you discovered newness in life through Christ? Did you have to step out in faith to do so? Perhaps you had to let go of your will and accept God's will. This

is a major turning point in the faith journey of many people. There are examples in Scripture about Job (Job 29-30), Elijah (I Kings 19:4-14), Mary Magdalene (Luke 8:1-2) and the women at the tomb (Luke 23:55 – 24:5). Consider the story of the rich young man (Matthew 19:16-26, Mark 10:17-31, Luke 18:18-30). He approached Jesus with a simple question: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus replied, "Go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven." When the young man heard this, he was very sad and walked away, because he was very rich. Given the choice, he found it difficult to forsake wealth in this world for the promise of God and eternal life.

Sometimes there are barriers or walls that complicate trying something new or stepping out in faith. What walls or barriers have you encountered? Consider the story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10), who wanted to witness Jesus preaching but was too short to see past the crowd. After Zacchaeus climbed a tree, Jesus called out to him and invited himself to lunch in Zacchaeus' home. We know what Jesus said to Zacchaeus,

and he was a different person afterward. He had changed from wanting wealth and success in this world to desiring significance through a life of faith. When have you, or your congregation, chosen success over significance? Perhaps when using numbers or the size of your facilities as a measure. Moving toward significance usually means sacrificing success. In what areas of ministry is your congregation seeking significance today?

Stepping out in faith may be a personal choice for a short time but usually involves accompanying others. As members in the body of Christ, we are not called to meet our own needs alone. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20) calls us to go beyond our barriers and bring the message of Jesus Christ to others. This helps us grow beyond a Christian enclave to become servants of Christ and a serving community. In what ways has your congregation moved from an enclave to a servant community?

Overcoming barriers and walls to make things new involves stepping out in faith. It means shaking loose from lethargy and moving out from sheltered comfort. In the process we break the chains of sin that hold us back and divide us from making us one in Christ. When we share in the distress of God's heart to do the kingdom's work, we are in tune with God's will, choosing significance over success and becoming a servant community. This is when we feel the vitality of our faith and the power of the Holy Spirit. May you experience this newness in Christ in and through your ministry.